

ISSUE 2
WINTER
1982/3

THE WIRE

JAZZ, IMPROVISED MUSIC AND.....



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THE WIFE AND THE WIRE



'THE WIRE' 23 MIRABEL ROAD,
SW6 7EQ 01-385 9984

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Printed by: Image Print Resources,
587 Wandsworth Road,
SW8 3JD 01-720 4460

Back in those long, warm lazy days that are forever July, our thoughts were on launching *The Wire* – what better place, we thought, than Knebworth Park – home of Britain's largest jazz festival – for the premier of a new jazz magazine?

So, with huge attendances predicted, and the weather set fair, we mustered our intrepid volunteers and armed ourselves with yellow T-shirts, megaphone – and, naturally, some copies of *The Wire* – and set off for Knebworth...

The first Sunday was clearly to be the biggest day with the cream of the world's jazz musicians in attendance... such 'jazz giants' as 'Chuckashat' and 'The Cruel Ciders' would ensure big sales.

Sunday came and so did the jazz-loving hordes – 20,000 to be exact – armed with food boxes, suntan lotion, *Sunday Mirrors* and other necessary jazz festival requirements.

So we mobilised ourselves into an unstoppable selling force and made our initial attack through the sunbathing throng...

'Got anything on The Cruel Ciders?' a punter asked. We looked at one another... speechless.

'Who's Steve Lacy?' another exclaimed. I called a hasty editorial meeting behind the chip van.

'Why is there no mention of The Cruel Ciders?' Page four described them as bland. That's enough, I whispered, 'who told me Steve Lacy was important enough to put on the front cover? Nobody has heard of him.'

My team were... speechless.

'Eer, mate. Can I have a copy of *The*

Wire? a voice muttered.

'It's called *The Wire*,' I retorted.

'I don't want it, then. I thought it said *The Wire*,' he moaned.

'Eureka!' I exclaimed, 'That's it. How about Joe Sample's *Wife Reveals The Torments Of Living With A Cruel Cider*... or for the more adventurous fan – *What Johnny Duckworth Eats For Breakfast, By His Wife – Clear Pain*...'

So, for the 60 short-sighted funksters who bought our magazine on 18th July, *WELCOME TO THE WIRE*. Meanwhile – for the rest of you – more important, relevant topics...

We were overwhelmed by the mail we received from readers pronouncing – as if we didn't already know – that *The Wire* was long overdue. However, we need to sell many more copies before we can really say we've arrived. So, we are looking for volunteers all over the country to sell us to the masses at jazz clubs, concerts, specialist shops, etc. Also, we need a special breed of character to sell advertising space on a commission basis. If you can help in any way, please contact us.

Channel 4 has arrived and, with it, the promise of plenty of jazz – with Miles Davis and The Art Ensemble of Chicago along the pipeline. We hope that Andy Park – Commissioning Music Editor and himself a jazz fan – will stick to his guns and weather the flack which will undoubtedly ensue over so-called minority programmes.

If so, Channel 4 and *The Wire* could herald a new era in the communication of jazz and improvised music to a wider audience. Anthony Wood

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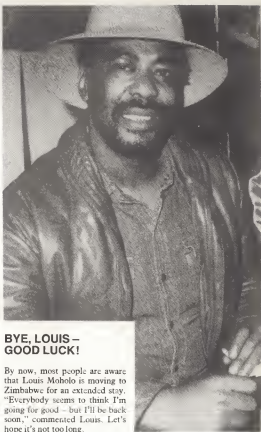
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BYE, LOUIS - GOOD LUCK!

By now, most people are aware that Louis Moholo is moving to Zimbabwe for an extended stay. "Everybody seems to think I'm going for good - but I'll be back soon," commented Louis. Let's hope it's not too long.

CAPTION COMPETITION RESULTS

In Issue One, we invited you to send a suitable caption or speech-bubble to complement the photograph of Lol Coxhill (the "well-known musician" featured on page 38).

We would like to thank all entrants for their contributions. An evening of much mirth was spent reading through the witty, if unprintable, entries.

The winner - as chosen by the Editor and the unfortunate victim, Lol Coxhill - is Richard Norworthy of Seven Sisters Road, Finsbury Park, London N4.

Richard's caption is: "Rear of the Beholder". Geddit? 'Course you do - it's an improvisation on the title of Lol's album *Rear of the Beholder*.

Well done, Richard - you can now claim your very own, personal, autographed copy of a current Lol Coxhill album.

The Wire confirms that the musician himself didn't enter but we did receive an outraged letter from his tailor. The matter is in the hands of our solicitor.



SONNY STITT

(1924-1982)

The jazz world mourns the passing of Sonny Stitt who died from cancer on 22nd July this year.

Here, Jack Massarik pays a personal tribute to Sonny Stitt, the sax-player other sax-players were most afraid of.

EDWARD STITT. Sounds like the name of a Commissioner for Oaths, doesn't it? It also probably explains why one of the greatest exponents of bebop saxophone who ever lived adopted a childhood nickname which never suited him very well.

Sonny Stitt – who was born in Boston in 1924, the son of a music teacher, and died last summer after a tragically swift illness – was never the Sonny Boy type.

True, he started his musical studies on piano and clarinet when he was only seven, but by the time he was 19 he was a tall, self-possessed figure, an accomplished professional touring round the United States as a featured soloist with Tiny Bradshaw's band.

In his final years, his greying hair and dignified bearing made him look more than ever like an African statesman than a jazz musician. In fact, this cool, introverted man bore all his career problems and hard times – and there were many of them – with a dignity few others in jazz have shown.

He needed all his courage and independence in the struggle to develop his career under the giant shadow cast by Charlie Parker. Like Parker, he often travelled as a single, playing and recording wherever and whenever he could. He also went through the complete narcotics nightmare – the years of sickness, the agonies of withdrawal and the residual problems with alcohol – with none of the sympathy and support that the more widely publicized cases attracted.

It was ironic that he should have been finally struck down only after he had fought his way back to fitness and a new lease of international fame.

Luckily for us, he made a lot of records. I was only 13 years old when I first heard one, and I was never the same again. The effect, as they say in the vodka ads, was shattering.

A stall-holder at the local market managed to talk a pimply pal of mine into buying a third-hand portable record-player and a job lot of about 20 45 rpm records. The record-player seemed to be made of cardboard and buckled when you picked it up. But the records were fantastic: a rare collection of early Vogue and Esquire sides featuring Stitt, Bud Powell, JJ Johnson, Milt Jackson, Tadd Dameron and Dizzy Gillespie.

As luck would have it, my acned buddy tired of his new toy after a few days and sold me the lot, including the record player, for £5. It was the first jazz I had ever heard, apart from snatches of Satck and George Shearing on *Family Favourites*, and I was spellbound.

It was like overhearing a group of people talking in a strange foreign language and yet being able somehow to understand large chunks of their conversation. And from the start, Sonny Stitt made the most sense.



I hadn't yet heard of Charlie Parker – that experience was to come a few months later when I had found my way to a jazz record shop – but, to my young ears, Sonny had the extra fluency and urgency of someone who knew exactly what he wanted to say.

Even after hearing Parker, I felt no less admiration and respect for Sonny's style, and could never understand how he could be described as a carbon copy of Bird. After all, nobody was describing Bud Powell, Milt Jackson or JJ Johnson as Parker clones.

The trouble was that they both played the same instrument, the alto, and the similarity of Stitt's tone to Parker's was the only thing that insensitive critics could hear. There is no doubt that this criticism hurt Sonny, who always knew he was his own man.

He switched from alto to tenor in the Fifties, obviously hoping the originality of his ideas would be more easily appreciated on another instrument, but I don't think there was ever any need for that.

Miles Davis once told the American critic

Ira Gitler that when the 18-year-old Stitt first visited St Louis with Bradshaw's band in 1942 – years before Parker's records had spread the bebop gospel round the world – his concept was much the same then as it always was.

And there is the famous story of the day Stitt and Parker met, in Kansas City the following year, and jammed together for an hour in an empty club before the owner came in. 'You sure sound like me,' Parker, who was four years older, told the youngster. 'I dig your approach.' is what I'm sure he meant, and not 'You're a copy-cat'.

Still, it was a double-edged story as far as Stitt's reputation went, as was the account of their final meeting, when Bird was said to have told Sonny 'who never spread the story himself': 'Man, I'm not long for this life. You carry on. I'm leaving you the keys to the kingdom.'

Stitt by this time was very much into the tenor keys, duelling regularly with Gene Ammons, whose lazier approach made a good contrast to Sonny's quick-thinking style, and

working with the first Hammond organ groups.

But he was working with Miles Davis the first time I saw him in person, at St George's Hall, Liverpool, in the early Sixties. By now I was a psychology student, an even keener saxophone student, and was wearing a crew-cut which I hoped would make me look like Bud Shank on the Pacific Jazz album covers. (My barber, unfortunately, had never heard of Bud Shank and used to make me look much more like Lol Coxhill.)

Miles' Quintet was in a transitional stage at that time. Coltrane had left and various tenorists were being tried, including Hank Mobley and George Coleman. But Stitt it was who made the tour, along with pianist Wynston Kelly, Paul Chambers on bass and Jimmy Cobb on drums.

It was a magnificent concert, and the moment I remember most clearly is when Sonny put down the tenor and took up the alto – always has most natural instrument – for a ballad feature. He played one of his favourites, 'The Gypsy', ending with an unaccompanied cadenza of such staggering virtuosity that a fellow in a nearby seat gave an involuntary laugh of delight heard all round the hall at the moment Sonny paused for breath.

My next encounter with Sonny was an unhappy one, on my first visit to New York many years later. He was playing at Syncopation, a newly opened club on Washington Square in Greenwich Village, and had been drinking heavily. Most of the playing was being done by a very young and only marginally talented alto-player.

It was not clear whether he was a pupil of Sonny's or just a cut-price standby booked by the club in case Sonny arrived late. Either way, it was a sad mistake.

A few well-known musicians, including Clifford Jordan and Dizzy Reece, had called in to pay their respects, hearing that Sonny was in town, but he did very little playing that night. Slumped in a chair, he took the occasional chorus and occasionally shouted 'No, no!' in anger when the youngster played some particularly ill-chosen notes. Even in this condition, though, the little that Sonny played was coherent.

I prefer to remember Sonny as he was on the last two occasions I saw him: in good

health and blowing a storm to cheering, standing-room-only audiences at the 100 Club and the Bull's Head in London. At the Bull's Head, I was trapped near the back of an absolutely packed house, and marvelled at the way Sonny could project his sound right through that solid wall of flesh.

As his co-leader Red Holloway grinned in approval, Sonny reared back and poured out chorus after chorus of music that had a rhythmic drive and logical clarity of idea that was his own special gift.

It has been a bad year for jazz, with the loss of Thelonious Monk, Art Pepper and Sam Jones, among others. But Sonny Stitt was my introduction to the whole wide, wonderful spectrum of this music. I wish he could have been spared a while longer. Of all the Sonnies in jazz, I always felt that 'Doc' or 'Major' or even 'Professor' would have suited this one better.

A selective, personal discography

Bud's Blues – with Bud Powell, brilliant early bebop (Prestige P-7839).

Sonny Stitt – with Jimmy Guiffre brass arrangements (HMV 7ED-8532).

Dizzy Gillespie – with Gillespie and Sonny Rollins, all on top form; double album (Verve VSP15-16).

Stitt Plays Bird – with John Lewis and Jim Hall (Atlantic ATL-1418).

Only The Blues – with Oscar Peterson Trio (Verve UMW2634).

Burnin' – with Barry Harris (Cadet 661).

Blues Up and Down – with Gene Ammons (Prestige P-7823).

Soul People – with Booker Ervin (Prestige P-7372).

Stitt For Starters – with Johnny Richards and Quincy Jones big bands; double album (PYE Verve series, VJD-555).

Sonny, Sweets & Jaws – with Eddie Lockjaw Davis and Harry Sweets Edison; possibly Stitt's last album (Kingdom Jazz GATE-7007).

Sonny, Sweets & Jaws (Kingdom Jazz GATE-7007).

Recorded: Bubba's, Fort Lauderdale, Florida – 11th November, 1981.

Side One: 'Lady Be Good'/'What's New'/'There Is No Greater Love'/'Side Two': 'The Chef'/'I Can't Get Started'/'Lester Leaps In'. Stitt (t/s)/Davis (t)/Edison (tp)/Eddie Higgins (p)/Donn Mast (b)/Duffy Jackson (d).

This one is worth having as a collector's piece, since it is probably the only time these distinguished hornmen recorded together as a sextet and almost certainly the last record date Stitt ever made. (Not for sure, though, for he was touring Japan shortly before he was taken ill and more records may yet emerge from that corner of the world.)

Everyone acquits themselves well, although the material is not exactly challenging. There are three swingers: 'The Chef', a 12-bar by Lockjaw which reminds me of quite a few other blues lines; 'Lady Be Good', which is actually one of Monk's originals on that sequence, and 'Lester Leaps In', that old warhorse on the 'I Got Rhythm' changes.

The front line take a ballad each. 'I Can't Get Started' features Jaws at his most Websterish; 'There Is No Greater Love' has Sweets changing neatly from mute to open horn, and 'What's New' finds Sonny playing alto for the only time on the session, and beautifully, too.

There are no problems in the rhythm section; Jackson is a crisp drummer who doesn't get in anyone's way. Mast plays a genuine double bass and Higgins is a tidy pianist with a skittering solo style reminiscent of Brian Lemon.

The headliners all do their thing at a level that will not disappoint their admirers, but it is noticeable that not once does Lockjaw follow directly after Sonny's tenor solos. This is no cutting contest; they keep to a tactful hating order of Sweets, Sonny, Higgins, Jaws, fours and out.

There is only one really jarring note on the record: the sanctimonious voice of the emcee, possibly the same Robert W Schachner who lists himself as Executive Producer above the rhythm section on the sleeve credits. He sounds like the preacher at an underworld funeral in the Bronx.

JM

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'A social phenomenon' – that's how the Ganelin Trio were hailed when their work first filtered through a chink in the Iron Curtain. Now, with the hindsight of four Ganelin albums, Roger Cotterell takes stock.

Maybe not since the first Ornette Coleman records appeared has western Europe jazz experienced quite such a shock of the totally unexpected as the Vyacheslav Ganelin Trio produced on first encounter.

When this unknown group from Vilnius in Lithuania played at the 1980 Berlin Jazz Days, Joachim Berendt wrote 'with three musicians playing approximately 15 instruments with breathtaking intensity, building their set to a euphoric climax, it was the wildest and yet the best organised and most professional free jazz I've heard in years'. Brian Case described the first Ganelin concert recording to be released in the West (*Live in East Germany* Leo LR 102) as 'one of the most exciting events that free music has ever staged'.



Photo Courtesy: Leo Records



Photo: S. Kozlov

out. Compared with the trio's later work it is, not surprisingly, conservative – with space for orthodox solos on familiar harmonic frameworks, modal playing and straightforward swinging rhythms. The music sounds a little amateurish but full of fresh ideas struggling to find a means of

humour perfectly complement Ganelin's careful balance of intellect and emotion. Ganelin does most to sketch the loose but satisfying structure of the trio's music through his compositions (which are often mere melodic, harmonic or rhythmic motifs), his strategic use of the bassist keyboard bass and his ability to call upon a remarkable range of piano idioms used in a wholly personal way. Tarasov is one of the most exciting and driving drummers in contemporary music but, equally important, he is the link man who listens carefully and adapts his playing to the different temperaments of his two colleagues.

On *Live in East Germany* all this is patent. *Con Fuoco* has many moments where this togetherness and inspiration is equally apparent, particularly perhaps on the driving modal improvisation of 'Catch 33' built around a minimal piano motif and also played during the East German concert. Undoubtedly these two records are the best introduction to the trio's work.

Ancora da Capo – spread over four sides and containing rather

THE GANELIN TRIO

The praise is undoubtedly fully justified as far as that and some other recorded examples of the trio's work are concerned. What was so startling was the combination of dazzling musicianship and technical ability, a long-matured originality which obviously drew on many idioms but had fused them into something powerfully expressive and convincing, and a wild, almost delinquent willingness to take the ultimate risks in musical performance. But now there are four albums of the group's music readily available on the Leo Records label. Putting them alongside some much rarer earlier recordings, it becomes possible to take stock, at least provisionally, of what has been called with somewhat breathless enthusiasm but without justification 'a social phenomenon of our time'.

Although pianist Ganelin, reedman Vladimir Chekasin and percussionist Vladimir Tarasov are new names to most western listeners, their music obviously has to come from a long collective musical experience. In fact, the Ganelin Trio has existed in its present form for 12 years. Ganelin became interested in jazz in 1962 and played at the Tallin Jazz Festival in 1965 while still a student at the conservatory in Vilnius. He began playing with

Tarasov in a duo in 1969 – 'simple bebop music and Coleman-like stuff' as he told *Jazz Forum* in a 1973 interview.

The duo began to attract national attention in the Soviet Union in 1970 with an appearance at a jazz festival in Gorky and the following year Chekasin, who was already making a name having won the international contest for young instrumentalists during the 1971 Prague Jazz Festival, joined to complete the trio. Since that time, reports of Soviet jazz have regularly singled out the Ganelin Trio for its outstanding, continually self-renewing and developing music. In 1973, a respected Soviet commentator wrote 'The Ganelin Trio is no doubt on a par with the strongest European jazz artists' and he hoped, vainly as it turned out, that international audiences would get the chance to hear them soon.

Listening to the group's first record *Con Anima* which was already recorded by early 1976 and eventually appeared on the Soviet Melodiya label, the impression is of musicians full of ideas but still sifting through various more or less incompatible idioms for a unified mode of expression. The record has about a dozen segments of music, some of them very short snatches of sound faded in and

expression. And there are the elements of humour, earthy explorations of folk roots (with much use of wooden flute and pipes) and wilful eccentricity which figure importantly in the music on the later records. One piece has quirky clarinet over thumping rhythm, and sounds like a jokey, irreverent, time-distorted reference to the old Benny Goodman Trio.

It obviously took many years of collective musical searching to produce the masterpiece which the 1979 *Live in East Germany* recording represents. Since its release, *Con Fuoco* (LR 106), collecting a performance from the 1980 Berlin appearance and several, typically varied, pieces from a 1978 Moscow concert, has appeared. And recently Leo have released two volumes (*Ancora da Capo* LR 108 and LR 109) of a Leningrad concert recording from November 1980. It would have been inconceivable that the amazing display of empathy, virtuosity, inspiration and sustained collective invention presented on the first, revelatory, Leo album could be repeated at the same level on all the others. For these are powerful and diverse personalities.

On *Live in East Germany*, Chekasin's wild exuberance and quirky, sometimes coarse,

too much doodling where inspiration plainly didn't strike – is disappointing. Significantly there are long passages where Chekasin doesn't play and where Ganelin's piano reverts to relatively orthodox jazz idioms (even sometimes hinting at chord sequences) in long solos backed by Tarasov's always sympathetic rhythms. When Chekasin enters it is often with even fiercer, more vocalised (and often gratuitously ugly) playing than on the earlier records. Sometimes Ganelin lays out and lets the reedman have the stage. There are, it must be said, relatively few passages where pianist and saxophonist play together with anything remotely approaching the empathy of the earlier records. Often the music sounds like two duos: saxes and drums (wild, unpredictable, earthy, intuitive) and piano and drums (disciplined more conservative in idiom, sometimes disappointingly unadventurous).

Maybe this was just one of those times when the muse was absent. Certainly there is enough brilliant music by this little powerhouse of a band on record, and available, to make sure that the Ganelin Trio deserves something more than just a footnote when the full history of the jazz of the Seventies and Eighties comes to be written.

I first came across Slim Gaillard when a rush of blood to the head – following a back-dated pay rise – made me buy the entire six-volume set of Charlie Parker Savoy recordings. Side one of Volume 2 didn't get played much – after all, it was a couple of numbers with Tiny Grimes and a duff rhythm section followed by four rather strange tracks which seemed to have very little to do with jazz at the time to this young purist. And nobody called Parker 'Charlie Yardbird O'Roonie' – not on my record-player, anyway.

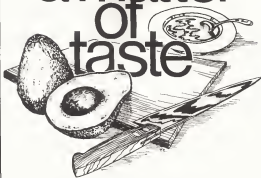
Ten or so years later, Martin Davidson brought me some tapes to help while away the time when I was in hospital. Knowing my taste well, he brought in some Charles Mingus, Albert Ayler and John Coltrane and on the final side was more of this strange guy – Slim Gaillard. It ended up at the bottom of the pile not listened to at all until one night when I couldn't sleep I decided to give it another go. Half way through the 'Avocado Seed Soup Symphony' I was hooked.

The record books will tell you that Bulee Gaillard was born in Detroit on 4th January, 1916. Somehow, when Gaillard was a schoolboy, his father – a steward on a liner – managed to leave him on the island of Crete. He didn't manage to find him again for six months!

Slim was 21 when he first turned up in the recording studio for a session with the likes of Frankie Newton, Russell Procope, Ed Hall and Cozy Cole. The following year, he formed the first of the two important musical relationships of his career – with the bassist Slam Stewart. The duo Slim and Slam started working the New York clubs and through regular appearances on New York radio soon had hits with 'Flat Foot Floogie' and 'Tutti Frutti'. Slim's first number connected with food. What this fascination is about I don't know – maybe I'll find out.

In 1941, Slim moved to Hollywood to spend time on the beach consuming groove juice specials. He also managed to find time to appear in several films – *Star Spangled Rhythm*, *Almost Married*, *Two Toes From Brooklyn* and the legendary *Hellsbopppin* which also featured Slam, Rex Stewart, Vic Dickenson and Sonny Greer. The army then took Slim away from music for a year – quite what they did with him hasn't been recorded but surely he must have speeded the end of the war.

a matter of taste



Avocado Seed Soup – Take a dozen avocado seeds; mix well with the juice of one groove. Pour resulting tutti-frutti into tall glasses and 'pop' on ice...

Vout-a-roonie loonie
Peter Budge offers his compliments to the chef – the irrepressible **SLIM GAILLARD**.

On leaving the forces, Slim formed his second relationship with a bass-player – Bam 'Tiny' Brown. This duo achieved even more success than the Slim and Slam pairing. The years 1945-1947 were probably the most productive in Slim's recording career. Slim and Bam, joined at times by Leo Watson (surely the only man to march Slim at his own brand of madness), managed to compile an amazing collection of vout lunacy coupled with some very fine jazz.

This was the period which gave us the 'Avocado Seed Soup Symphony', 'Opera in Vout', 'Cement Mixer', 'African Jive' and 'Yip Rock Heresy' – could that last one really be a menu at an Armenian restaurant? It was also the period which produced the famous session with Parker and Gillespie. They were visiting California; a disastrous trip as it turned out – ending with Parker staying in Camarillo. But Slim had a habit of using whoever was around at the time to play on his sessions and achieving the most entertaining results from what may not seem to be the most promising situation.

As well as the clowning, Slim

never forgot he was a jazz musician and we also find him in company with leading players of an earlier vintage like Willie Smith and Bobby Hackett, reminding everyone that he can really play. By this time he had added to guitar, vibes and piano, the ability to play trumpet, trombone and tenor saxophone but regrettably there doesn't seem to be any recorded evidence of his work on these instruments.

By 1951, Slim had returned to New York and was recording again. Various sessions at Birdland had him borrowing musicians from the other band that was on that night. So we find him with tenorists Brew Moore and 'Lockjaw' Davis, vibist Terry Gibbs, pianist Billy Taylor and also, on one occasion, Art Blakey. It was also the period of many hands – the internationally Famous Orchestra featured Buddy Tate, the Southern Fried band Taft Jordan, and the Shintoists had Ben Webster.

Slim spent the rest of the Fifties working as a single and a comedian. He learned something from the newly emerging rock'n'roll as he can be heard on the trio session from 1958. His ability

to adapt a lyric was still there as

shown in the superb version of 'How High the Moon'.

Very little was heard of him throughout the Sixties but he suddenly reappeared in a reunion with Slam Stewart at the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1970. Then back to obscurity with this promoter wondering (i) if he was still alive, (ii) if he could be found, and (iii) if Coleridge Goode could be dragged off the tennis courts long enough to tour with him.

The first question was answered in quite an amazing way when the credits for one instalment of *Roots – The Next Generation* was being shown on TV. I couldn't quite believe it but there it was 'Special Guest Star – Slim Gaillard'. The trouble was that no-one quite looked like the old photographs I had of him on record sleeves – and no-one in the film spoke vout (with sub-titles). But now he is back in the jazz world and, what's more, he is touring Europe. From all accounts he was the hit of this year's Nice Jazz Festival. Best of all he's come to London.

So, what is it about Slim's music that turned the young jazz purist into a middle-aged vout devotee. I suppose it all really happened at a time when jazz was taking itself much too seriously and here was a man prepared to laugh at it all while still playing great music.

Slim has an amazing ability to twist lyrics round, turning them into something totally different while doing an excellent imitation of the likes of Billy Eckstine. Then there is vout. Many jazz singers, probably even before the famed Louis Armstrong session, have used scat but no-one else has created a whole new language out of it. Someone has even threatened to produce a Vout/English dictionary.

He plays music I like. His sense of humour is one that appeals to me. And he obviously likes food. When asked to write this piece I tried to obtain a recipe for Avocado Seed Soup from cookery specialist Jane Grigson but even she couldn't find (or invent) one.

Anyone who wants to cook avocado seeds must be mad – but what fine madness.



ESSENTIAL VOUT LISTENING

McVouty – Slim & Bam (HEP 6). 1945-46 sessions recorded in Los Angeles with Leo Watson. Guest appearances from Willie Smith, Vic Dickenson and Bobby Hackett. Includes 'Avocado Seed Soup Symphony' and 'Yip Roc Heresy'.

Son of McVouty – Slim & Bam (HEP 11). More of the above vintage with 'Cement Mixer', 'Tutti Frutti' and 'Chicken Rhythm'. Also a 1941 recording of 'African Jive' which was Chico Hamilton's debut.

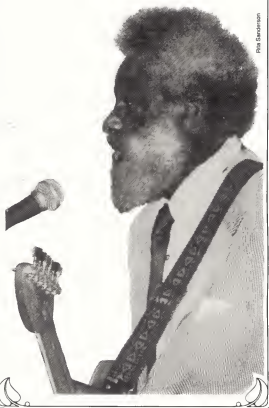
Charlie Parker Memorial Volume 2 (Spotlite, 150). The legendary 1945 Savoy recordings with Parker, Gillespie and Jack McVea. Just four tracks which include 'Flat Foot Floogie' and the remarkable 'Slim's Jam'.

The Voutist (HEP 28). A mid-1946 club evening at Billy Berg's with Bam Brown and Leo Watson. Numbers include 'Popitty Pop', 'Atlantic Cocktail' and 'Taysay Nalee'.

Slim Gaillard/Opera in Vout (Verve 2304 554). Recently reissued album that straddles the LA and New York sessions. Side one has Slim and Bam (or vice versa) performing 'Opera in Vout'. Side two comprises various sessions from 1951-52 by Slim and his Peruvians, his Internationally Famous Orchestra, his Middle Europeans, his Southern Fried Orchestra, his Musical Aggregation – Whenever He May Be, his Shintovists and his Bakers Dozen.

Slim Gaillard at Birdland (HEP 21). 1951 live recordings from Birdland. Two 'Flat Foot Floogies', one 'Cement Mixer' and a 'Lady Be Good'. A reunion with Slam Stewart plus Billy Taylor, Terry Gibbs, Brew Moore and Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis.

Collectables – Slim Gaillard Trio (MCA 1508). The Dot 1958 sessions with an unidentified trio. A magnificent 'How High the Moon' and 'Rooster Rock'. Included is a previously unissued 'A Train'.



Slim Gaillard at The Canteen – Where Else?

SLIM GAILLARD – Canteen It was a pity that it was a rainy Monday when Slim Gaillard started his week in residence at The Canteen in London as he is obviously a man who thrives on his audience. Although there were not too many of us, he certainly made us all feel very much at home – and that it was his home.

He started off with his 'second number' which was 'Claire de

Lune' played with the backs of his hands. The club-owner missed it so Slim played 'Never On Sunday' the same way – very fast. The 'fourth number' was 'A Train' and the band immediately got into the nice steady rhythm that is Slim's trademark. J. Thomas soloed competently on both alto sax and trumpet, sandwiching Slim's Ellingtonesque piano solo.

Then Slim got into a long chat about his life and his music. Everyone who arrived was personally greeted and immediately had a number dedicated to them. In the middle of all this, we heard all-too-brief snippets from all the

hits – 'Flat Foot Floogie', 'Cement Mixer', 'Down By the Station', 'Popitty Pop', and 'Satin Doll' (Slim wrote one bar, so he told us). Then 'Pennies from Heaven' – ('Everytime it rains it rains rain') – quickly segued into 'Lady Be Good' which featured J. Thomas on his third instrument, flugelhorn. A lengthy solo enabled him to show a fine tone and an inventive flow coupled with a quick response to the quirky chords Slim was feeding him.

We then returned to the chat, Slim sitting at the piano beaming out at the audience and checking on everyone's food. In order that the newcomers could catch up on the fun, he then gave us 'Laughing In The Rhythms' featuring J. Thomas on alto.

To end his first set, he picked up his guitar and just got into improvising on flamenco rhythms, just as if he came straight from Spain.

'Claire de Lune' (again, so latecomers could catch up) started the second set. Then we got into the straight-jazz bit with 'Lester Leaps In' and 'Symphony Sid' giving extended blowing room to both J. Thomas and himself.

Of the band, J. Thomas showed equal facility on all three of his instruments and an amazing ability to switch between them without any difficulty but perhaps didn't quite have the strength to cope with Slim. Drummer John Boucher – returning to London after a seven-year absence – was perhaps a bit too fussy for this particular idiom. Full marks must go to bassist Chucho Merchan who, although he spent most of the time between numbers doubled up with laughter, managed to provide the necessary steady pulse to the music.

And Slim Gaillard, he is an entertainer operating in an art form that has rejected entertainers as selling out. Yet, like all the others – from Louis Armstrong to the Art Ensemble of Chicago via Dizzy Gillespie – he plays jazz and he plays it well. What more could one ask? Except for diners to leave their prawn bones.

Peter Budge

It's not unusual to hear British jazz musicians complaining about the shortage of paying gigs. There have always been few enough, but over the past few years their number has dwindled dramatically.

Yet it is doubly ironic that, at a time when the pickings become increasingly slim for British jazz musicians, others who have adopted elements of their style should find themselves working more than the originators.

Rip, Rig & Panic, to quote but one example, play regularly enough; their pianist Mark Springer combining the elements of Keith Tippett and Dollar Brand in roughly equal parts. Most of the Rip Rig audience have probably never heard (of) Keith Tippett.

Over the years, Tippett has poured effort into developing and creating an original and expressive piano style. It has been a slow, laborious process documented on record and highlighted in his concerts, resulting in a singularly identifiable approach to the piano. The cornerstones of his playing include a precise understanding of momentum allied with a swirling dexterity, a rich textural sensitivity and an ability to communicate with his listeners on a visceral, emotional level.

These qualities have elevated Tippett to his position as a musician of international stature. Nevertheless, he has worked so little in recent years that he was on the verge of packing it in completely two years ago. His wife, Julie Tippetts, persuaded him to continue.

The story of Tippett's rise to public attention has been documented often enough. After moving around the periphery of the London jazz scene in the mid-Sixties, he met Nick Evans, Mark Charig and Elton Dean (trombone, cornet and saxophones, respectively) at one of the Barry summer schools. They teamed up with a rhythm section and almost immediately cut deep into the heart of both the jazz and rock circuits. The Keith Tippett Group recorded two Polydisc albums and then fragmented. The front line joined Soft Machine while Tippett turned down an offer to become a member of King Crimson and concentrated on assembling the glorious, sprawling 50-strong Centipede which seemed to straddle every musical category known to mankind. He is still juggling with the idea of putting Centipede together again, believing that the musical climate has probably never been more appropriate – and he's probably right.

As if the scale of the Centipede project had left him exhausted, Tippett then turned, on the one

hand, to the condensed intimacy of Ovary Lodge while, on the other, he performed with almost every band to include an Ogun artist ('I was virtually the Ogun house pianist – and I loved it'). Despite another large-scale venture – Ark – work became harder to find and Tippett's fortunes appeared to decline alongside those of his erstwhile record company, Ogun. *The Unlonesome Raindancer*, a double album recorded live during a short solo tour, was released by a small, independent Dutch label, a move which culminated in the release of another solo album, *Mujician*, and *No Gossip* with drummer Louis Moholo earlier this year.

The FMP albums clearly demonstrate those qualities and attributes which make Tippett such a crucial musician. The passion and invention of the improvisation is constantly recharged by the expertise and discipline he brings to it. As a result, the music is both intense and densely structured, but finely sculptured details flash within the total music with a stunning clarity. These recordings also boast a melodic balance which allows the music, at its best, to soar. But Tippett never sacrifices flexibility or responsiveness to achieve these ends. This is particularly evident on the duo album with Louis Moholo where the understanding and the delicate shifts in the relationships between the two musicians are a delight to perceive. It is interesting to compare these albums with *The Unlonesome Raindancer* recorded three years earlier in April 1979. The latter appears, on one level, to be an exploded diagram of the music to be found on FMP.

'Some of the more radical tracks on *The Unlonesome Raindancer* were blueprints of the techniques I'd got together at that point,' Tippett explains. 'I wanted to get those down on record because there's a lot of slick thieves in this business and I wanted it documented. *Mujician* was made three years later, so these had developed further, but after stating them in an obvious way – on separate tracks – for *The Unlonesome Raindancer*, I wanted to combine them in the whole musical structure. I would say the *Mujician* was more succinct.'

Further comparison of the two records goes one step further: it shows Tippett honing and distilling his piano style and simultaneously expanding certain aspects of it. This is a very conscious procedure, one crucial to a musician's development, as Tippett describes: 'There's a difference between nervous habits and musical vocabulary. I'm forever shedding my nervous habits – and I hope that I will always recognise

those – but to shed your vocabulary can stunt your growth. It's a delicate line between the two; the responsibility of the individual artist is to recognise his nervous habits and eradicate them, but to nurture his vocabulary.'

Tippett has employed that vocabulary in an intriguing range of settings, despite the fact that his appearances have been somewhat infrequent of late. He has played in duos with long-time associates Louis Moholo and Elton Dean, with pianist Howard Riley, with Julie Tippetts and as a member of Derek Bailey's Company of free improvisors... yet his work has always been immediately recognisable. It has Tippett's fingerprints all over it and yet finds him constantly overhauling and reshaping it to suit each musical environment.

'I'm peripatetic. I'm really catholic in my love of music. I love everything from Palestrina to Ligeti, to Pygmy music, the Beatles, Louis Armstrong and Cecil Taylor. I feel as at home playing with Derek Bailey's Company as I would have done – if I'd had the opportunity – with Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath. My musical personality enables me to encompass those things without having to clip any of my own identity. I think that's one of my strengths, that I can play with both Company and Nonesense without compromising my own music, and do it in a democratic way.'

'I have no problems working with either pre-conceived composition or improvisation. The only difference between the two is that one is a quicker process. Spontaneous improvisation is composition – you're just not taking the trouble to write it down, and that's more dangerous in a way. In fact I love to combine the melodic and atonal things. I often say that I play more melodically with Derek Bailey because of that sense of balance. That's one of the things that I don't like about the "modern European improviser" – a lot of them are scared to string three notes or sounds together and create a melody. And if you take away melody you take away everything.'

In view of comments such as this, it's perhaps a little curious to find that Tippett is now involved with FMP, the label established to release music by 'modern European improvisers', even if he is quick to qualify the remark by commenting that the word 'melody' did not have to be interpreted in the usual or conventional sense. However, his involvement with FMP resulted in a three-week tour of Germany during May this year. It was the most concentrated period of work

No gossip from the Mujician



John Kelly

Pianist, composer, band-leader, innovator, catalyst – the internationally acclaimed KEITH TIPPETT is all these things – and more... Here, Tippett talks to Kenneth Ansell about the artist's inevitable choice – making money, or making music.

he has enjoyed in recent years, and confirmed what he already knew: it is only through such prolonged periods of activity that his playing will fully mature and grow to its full potential.

'I can practise for eight hours a day at home, but it isn't like walking out on stage and getting the feedback from the people. I was playing every night in Germany; the venues were very, very good, the pianos were top class, the acoustics, the accommodation... everything was perfect. All I had to worry about was creating, I could relax on stage and concentrate on that. After three or four days my technique was bubbling, I didn't have to worry about that any more, and I hit a clearing in the music where everything was clear and the beauty was there. I wasn't going up there and "getting away with it" or being "professional".'

'In fact, the last date of the tour was in Bath. I finished the German tour and had this one date left to play. Julie came, and she said that she had never heard me play so beautifully before - and we've been married for 13 years.'

'But now it's all gone because I haven't worked. I can get it back, but to do that I must work. I'm 35

now, and at this stage in my career I must work regularly in public in order to get that clarity and' pureness or else I'm not going to develop to my full potential. I know that. I can't do it in my kitchen playing scales.'

'And I've given up with the JCS in this country. I haven't been happy with the fees they offer for a number of years. The duet album, *No Gossip*, came out in May this year and, back in February, I rang the JCS to see if I could get three dates in Britain with Louis to promote it. Eventually they came back and said that we could play the 100 Club in June. But all they offered us was £25 each plus my fares. That was the straw which broke the camel's back. My track record shows that I'm not a bread-head, but unless their attitude changes towards me I can't see myself working for them again in the foreseeable future.'

If the tour of Germany confirmed for Tippett that the conditions under which the JCS expected him to work were unacceptable, it also re-affirmed for him the root of that motivation which keeps him playing music against all the odds:

'I know what is magic in music,

and I know that I can achieve it. It happened a couple of times during that tour of Germany.'

'The first time was when I was a chorister. My voice was breaking but I had a solo in a beautiful anthem by Purcell. Early on in the solo there was an awkward interval to jump and at rehearsals my voice kept cracking. It was a fantastic choir and I was very nervous that I'd goof it. But on the night I was enveloped by what seemed a golden light and I hit that note as pure as I ever could have done. And I knew that the whole church knew that this was a musical happening.'

'I've had that about 12 times in my life, all the rest since I've been a professional musician.'

'So I know what that magic is and I know that it works on an audience, too - it's not just me. When you hit that spot, you can turn a whole audience. I've heard Evan Parker do it on a number of occasions and I've spoken to him about it. He understands that, too. Although physically it is you whose playing, in effect it's not actually you. You're walking a tightrope; it's a very delicate thing. It's very difficult to get, but it is the purest form of music.'

Keith Tippett returns to Berlin

in November to perform at the FMP festival with saxophonist Larry Stabbins and Louis Moholo. FMP record the whole festival so it is likely that a subsequent release will feature the trio. This may, in turn, be of assistance in generating work for Tippett. It will certainly add to the small catalogue of his recordings readily available. And records are now part of the understood currency of modern jazz against which live work may be negotiated, the volume of work offered being dictated in direct proportion to the number of records available.

Let us trust that it may be so; it is vital that Tippett, and other musicians of his importance and stature, work regularly.

'I've turned down a lot of opportunities in the past to make a lot of money within the music business,' Tippett concludes, 'but I decided to treat music as a career, as a way of developing spiritually and as a way of life. In fact, I've dedicated my life to it...'

'I'm prepared to die for this music actually, but I'd rather not - I'd rather live for it.'



Jim Kelly



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Charlie Parker

SEVEN STEPS TO JAZZ

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JOHNNY HODGES (1906-1970)

The blues that Benny Carter played and plays tend to be airy and abstract, melodic rather than emotional. Johnny Hodges approached matters differently. He was coached early on by Sidney Bechet, and both Bechet's majestic, rolling manner and his eloquence in blues playing remained for ever an intrinsic part of Hodges equipment.

Carter was, for practical purposes, a member of Duke Ellington's orchestra from 1928 until his death. During the Thirties and Forties his solos possessed a toughness that softened up a little later on (indeed, his slow, legato playing could become too sugary). But, at its best, Hodges's work was passionate in a way that contrasted with the saxophonist's impassivity on-stage, the face set like an Aztec mask, eyes often glancing at wristwatch in the middle of a solo.

One of his most ravishing – and moving – performances, however, occurred in 1967, just after the death of Billy Strayhorn, when the Ellington band recorded 'Blood Count' for the LP *And His Mother Called Him Bill*.



Lee Konitz

CHARLES FOX continues his personal selection of some of the musical giants who took the jazz form to new and unparalleled heights.



In this issue, he looks at the great innovators in the music on the alto-sax.

BENNY CARTER (1907)

Unlike the trumpet, trombone and clarinet – instruments that found an identity (often quite an earthy one) in New Orleans jazz – the saxophone was a latecomer, arriving in the Twenties when musicians became more self-conscious about technique.

Benny Carter exemplifies the kind of elegance that was still fairly new in jazz at that time. His solo work in purely musical terms: no growls, no squeals, a covert approach to emotion. Significantly, Carter's penchant for creating melodic solos fits alongside his skills as a composer and arranger: composers always prefer a coherent over-all shape to any kind of instant excitement.

Apart from a short-lived attempt to inject bebop into his style – quickly recognised as a blunder – Carter has maintained almost uncannily high standards over half a century. (He is also, of course, a gifted trumpet-player.)

Where a musician has been a bandleader, it seems perverse to pick a recording on which he worked as a sideman, yet few Carter solos hang together more serenely than the one he took on Lionel Hampton's 'Shoe Shiner's Drug'.



Benny Carter

CHARLIE PARKER (1920-1955)

Genius is a word that gets used far too frequently. But Louis Armstrong deserved the appellation. So did Charlie Parker, who drove himself hard to acquire his skills (he taught himself to play in every key, not just the regular jazz keys), yet whose music hits the listener like a force of nature.

His impact upon his fellow musicians was as overwhelming as Armstrong's had been a decade-and-a-half earlier. Maybe the style originally owed something to Lester Young, or to the obscure 'Buster' Smith, but the identity became unique and literally imitable. Plenty of alto-players tried to copy Bird: they could imitate the phrases, come up with something not far removed from that edgy, hypnotising tone; where they all failed was in placing the notes.

Parker's rhythmic audacity was, if anything, even more remarkable than the extravagance of his melodic improvising. And unlike most of the other bebop pioneers he was an instinctive blues player, one of the greatest in jazz. All those qualities turn up in solo after solo, but never more urgently than in 'Parker's Mood'.

LEE KONITZ (1927)

Not sounding like Charlie Parker seems a slender claim to virtue. But for Lee Konitz, who came on to the jazz scene halfway through the Forties, it was a feat of character as well as of aesthetic independence. Konitz claims that later on, in fact, he did imitate Bird, yet any objective listener perceives in his recordings a different kind of imagination at work.

Konitz's early association with Lennie Tristano suggested an intellectual attachment, almost a puritan tidiness. Yet such things are deceptive: emotion in art is rarely a matter of direct self-expression. Konitz's improvising has always worked tangentially, arriving at conclusions in a slightly indirect fashion. Cool is not quite the adjective to apply, although it certainly got used. Even more interestingly perhaps, Konitz can, on occasions, appear to lose his way – one of the penalties of spontaneity.

Maybe it would have made equal sense to pick Art Pepper or Paul Desmond instead, yet Konitz has an historical importance that those two lack. A typically buoyant solo is that on 'I Remember You' (from the 1961 *Motion*).

ORNETTE COLEMAN (1906-1968)

Instinct plays a part in the careers of all the greatest jazz musicians. Ornette Coleman is typical in having known what he wanted to do long before he got round to analysing it. His background helped, especially the south-west blues tradition (abandoning set harmonies and playing 'free' comes more easily when you have worked in a few rhythm-and-blues bands).

Coleman's freedom, in fact, was largely a matter of dropping chord changes and bar-lengths, for he has nearly always used rhythm sections that swung in a superb yet relatively conventional way. Nevertheless, Coleman's arrival in New York in 1960 left many older musicians aghast (they were to be jolted again, soon afterwards, by the very different innovations of John Coltrane).

Coleman, however, was always more of a natural melodist than an iconoclast. Sometimes his instinct has betrayed him: latterday collaborations with guitar players echo that first, slightly disastrous LP when his group included a pianist. Yet Coleman's finest work can be either shatteringly intense or beguilingly gentle. A shining example of the latter is his solo on 'Peace', recorded in 1960 for *The Shape of Jazz To Come*.

ERIC DOLPHY (1928-1964)

Innovators do not always receive proper recognition in their lifetimes, not even in jazz. Eric Dolphy, for instance, was unlucky enough to arrive in New York just after Ornette Coleman. Coleman's fairly drastic rejigging of jazz improvising inevitably overshadowed Dolphy's activities, narrower in scope yet influential in a way that became ap-



Ornette Coleman

parent only after his death.

Like Coleman, Dolphy could play with great fervour; indeed, there was, lurking behind the intricacies of his solo lines, something of Johnny Dodd's naked power. His improvising moved above familiar harmonies, yet in an irregular, almost skittish fashion, phrases juxtaposed rather than consequent upon one another. And the method was used not only for the alto-saxophone, but also for

the bass clarinet, an instrument that Dolphy virtually made part of the jazz armoury.

Much of the time, he worked in other people's bands, notably with Charles Mingus. Mingus's 1960 recording of 'Folk Forms No 1' (on *Mingus Presents Mingus*) is unquestionably a jazz classic – and helped to be so by Dolphy's cryptic yet overwhelming playing.

ANTHONY BRAXTON (1945)

No jazz musician of any prominence is more of a multi-instrumentalist than Anthony Braxton, almost the embodiment of what the newer Chicago school has been up to. And, of course, he is also the composer of pieces that are usually identified by diagrams rather than titles.

Yet, like all jazz soloists with quiddity, Braxton sounds more authentic, and, above all, more inventive on just a single horn – in his case, the alto saxophone. Including him among the seven indispensables could be sabotaged by his concentrating suddenly on one of those other options. At the start of the Eighties, however, Braxton comes across as an alto-player with something urgent and important to say – and always fastidiously, with a concern for form.

More than almost any of his black contemporaries, he fits happily alongside European free improvisers. Yet, as Alan Lomax once said of Big Bill Broonzy's voice, he can summon up that old rooster crow. How well he operates within the Afro-American tradition comes across in 'Dance Griot', one of a set of exhilarating duets with that nonpareil drummer Max Roach, recorded in 1978 for the LP *Birth and Rebirth*.

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Anthony Braxton



CHARLES MINGUS

- A Critical View

For two years, Brian Priestley has been immersed in a true labour of love - writing a definitive book about CHARLES MINGUS*. With the book's ultimate publication, the writer confesses that he has emerged from this long period 'like a new listener'.

Editor Anthony Wood tells the story of how, on the day Mingus's death was announced, he went to a record store not a million miles from Camden Town and immediately played the *Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* album. Not only was he depressed spirit uplifted in no time, but the power of the music instantly converted a customer who had been totally unaware of Mingus's existence, let alone his death.

What better proof could there be that music does not die with its creators but, provided it continues to be played or (if improvisational) is preserved on record, it lives on in the response of new listeners. But it's undeniable that - as is still true of Mingus - death can give your reputation quite a boost. Especially if you've been underrated during your lifetime, which is all the more likely when you're officially black. I say 'officially' because, of course, most societies force their citizens to be one thing or the other, but in fact Mingus's parentage was mixed on both sides - I know you're not going to believe this, but I have documentary proof - he was apparently one-quarter English!

Having spent most of my time during the last two years writing a book about him, I have had to try and straighten out questions of parentage, the exact number of his own wives and children, his most significant fist-fights, etc. But, of course, I have also had to get closer to his music than ever

before. Now at last, emerging from such a long and intense involvement in its every detail, I feel like a new listener myself.

On the face of it, everybody can readily identify the Mingus sound - indeed, once heard it is hard to forget. Emotionally expressive 'hot'-toned horn players, several lines running simultaneously (either in counterpoint between several horns or counterpoint between horn and rhythm instruments), the crucial role of the rhythm section in determining the shape of a performance. And yet... Not only do some pieces have only one of these elements, some have none at all, while remaining immediately identifiable as Mingus music. In fact, Mingus's range of expression was extremely wide, wider than that of anyone in jazz except his idol Duke Ellington. His attempt to be the post-bop Ellington was, you would have thought, foredoomed to failure by the nature of bop itself, but Mingus's approach ignored such restrictions and was in any case complicated by other factors, namely his love for, on the one hand, European music and, on the other hand, blues and gospel.

In the process of working out this powerful three-way contradiction, he created something else, the jazz avant-garde of the Fifties. His recordings of 1954-55 - which I never fully appreciated until recently - show numerous attempts to find the fusion finally achieved on the title track of *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, which combines the type of free collective improvisation posited by Lennie Tristano with the saxophone screams of Illinois Jacquet in a modal framework which became ultimately very influential. Note also how the famous 'Table Dance' from *Tijuana Moods*, although it sounds 'Latin' rather than 'avant-garde', actually dispenses with a repeating chorus structure and has, instead, brief unison ensembles continually dissolving into improvisation, thereby foreshadowing both Ornette's *Free Jazz* and Coltrane's *Ascension*. And how 'What Love' successfully disguises its structure by repeatedly going in and out of tempo, in a pre-planned but totally natural-sounding way.

Just thinking of the connection with Latin music, a good case could also be made for Mingus (along with Dizzy Gillespie) as the father of jazz-rock, but even more important, perhaps, is the lesson to be learned from Mingus that the technical means do not dictate the end. For example, the saxophone squeaks at the end of 'Bird Calls' create a totally different effect from those on 'Pithecanthropus' whereas *East*

Coasting, an album which can be compared track by track with *Tijuana Moods*, comes across as considerably more mellow. Mingus, in fact, could be very mainstream even while forging ahead into unknown territory: the alternating riffs of 'West Coast Ghost' must date from the early years of the century, while the two figures on which 'Folk Forms' is based could be traced back through King Oliver to Scott Joplin and probably to the minstrel shows.

Certainly, Mingus began to see his role as being to revitalise the traditional practices of jazz. Quickly condemning the excesses of free music (though who could be more excessive than Mingus?), he began at the start of the Sixties recording Ellington tunes and incorporating Parker re-creations in his live performances. Paradoxically, this did not preclude the creation of further remarkable works such as the Monterey 'Meditations', 'Sue's Changes' and Mingus's last great extended piece *Cumbia and Jazz Fusion*, but there may still be reason to regret the timing of his anti-avant-garde stance. Already twice before, his timing had worked to his own disadvantage. In 1951, just when the boom of West Coast jazz was poised to take off, Mingus left the Coast. He set up home in New York where jazz was going through one of its lean spells, whereas in 1943 he had remained in the West when Oscar Pettiford - just the same age as Mingus - hit New York and was immediately accepted as the new giant bassist. Amazingly enough, the seeds of Mingus's innovations on bass, which have influenced everybody for two decades or more, were already present on obscure mid-Forties records, but at the time no-one knew it except on the Coast.

Perhaps the act of distancing himself from the new avant-garde of the Sixties was Mingus's first conscious move towards earning a reputation not just as a musical style-setter, but as a unique and unclassifiable contributor to jazz. But, in reality, he wanted to have it both ways. In somewhat similar fashion, after putting together (with Max Roach) the first musician-organised festival in protest against the Newport set-up, he happily went back to work for George Wein in subsequent years. You might also think his attitude ambivalent when you consider that, though he clearly suffered as much as anyone else from being officially black (and, from time to time, aligned himself with those working to im-

prove the lot of racial minorities), his early night-club conditioning told him that the best way to feel like a Black Saint was to have a White Woman - preferably one who shared his interest in equality, but who would also devote herself to furthering his career. Fortunately for him, he finally fulfilled this ambition during the last decade of his life.

In retrospect, it's interesting that our Anthony chose the *Black Saint* on that day in January 1979, for one part of me has always rebelled against the idea that this is Mingus's greatest masterpiece. This would be like saying that *Sketches of Spain* was Miles Davis's best record. Certainly both of them could only have been achieved in the recording studio, and both of them are among the best reasons for being grateful that records were invented. To that extent, they are unrepresentative but Mingus's album shows many of his major concerns (echoes of Ellington, borrowings from bop, the Latin tinge, great rhythmic intensity and variety, soloists whose tones make your speaker almost catch fire) and shows them in a state of perfect, studio-produced equilibrium. As with the other items in this highly selective (but readily available) list, I can safely say: New listeners start here, your lives will never be the same again.



Pithecanthropus Erectus (1956) - Atlantic SD8809.

'Ysabel's Table Dance' (*Tijuana Moods*, 1957) - RCA FXL1 7295.

'West Coast Ghost' (*East Coasting*, 1957) - Affinity AFF86.

'Bird Calls' (*Nostalgia in Times Square*, 1959) - CBS.

'What Love' and 'Folk Forms' (*At Antares*, 1960) - Atlantic SD2-3001.

Black Saint and the Sinner Lady (1963) - Jasmine JAS13.

'Meditations' (*Mingus at Monterey*, 1964) - Prestige 68.339.

'Sue's Changes' (*Changes*, 1974) - Atlantic 60108.

Cumbia and Jazz Fusion (1977) - Atlantic 50486.

The multi-talented CARLA BLEY lifted more than a few sagging spirits as she passed through recession-gripped Britain last month with Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra.

She has been described as 'the most original pianist-composer since Monk', and her latest album – *Live!* – with her own band is already proving one of 1982's biggest success stories.

In a rare moment of relaxation, Carla Bley offered Stan Britt an insight into her individual world of music.

To get a chance of just a few words with the talented Carla Bley is, in itself, something of a rare event. The results invariably are never less than interesting even though, on this latest occasion, the lady is suffering from both jet-lag and a heavy cold – a potent combination that lowers the husky voice by almost an octave.

For the former Carla Borg is most certainly articulate, and she usually has something of real interest to say. About her own current band, for example – an intriguing hybrid containing

players whose styles are as diverse as their musical backgrounds. Including the last visit here – in October 1981 – the Carla Bley Band has been together for four major tours.

'They're absolutely marvellous. For me it's great. And we work for *everything* – we work for our "luxuries."

'As a writer, I write with a full knowledge of every one of the guys. But that, in itself, presents a problem. I know just how each and every one of them plays, but when one guy changes, it's really rough on me – it means I have to

change the entire book.

'One particular minor catastrophe happened when the french horn player I'm using now – Vincent Chancey – stopped working for my band for about a year, and I couldn't find another french horn player that I wanted to use in his place. So I had to go to a new instrument. Naturally, the range is different – and the whole idea of that instrument is different, too.

'Then, I started doing things with a euphonium for a long time. But when I got the french horn player back, I had to switch back

CARLA BLEY

again. It was rough. At least, though, I have a french horn book and a euphonium book now!

'Mind you, that's a fairly clear-cut problem. A more subtle problem is when you find someone who plays the same instrument *totally differently* – it means you can't use the existing book for that person.

'My current alto player, Steve Slagle, plays so differently from my previous altoist, Carlos Ward, that I had to change everything

The staying together of any aggregation like Carla's is dependent not only on musical rapport but also on how the guys relate to each other. Thankfully, reports the leader, 'they all get along great ... but if something does come up, I can only keep them apart'.

If the question arose that Carla Bley wished to revive something in her ever-growing book – something, say, she'd written specifically to feature Carlos Ward, but which wouldn't seem to suit Steve Slagle – what's the answer?

'I can, sometimes, revive a piece, knowing that I might have something that could work for Steve that didn't perhaps really work for Carlos. If it were a really old piece? Well, I'd have to re-orchestrate it – if I had the time. But I've done that kinda thing before, on several occasions.'

Could the same thing be done for something as specialised as

3/4? 'That's a much different kind of orchestration. Anyway, I could



never play that live. Yes, it's been played live by chamber orchestras. But not by my own band, not for this band. That piece was commissioned for its own orchestration. I have thought very hard what to do with it since those original concerts . . . use a bassoon, or an oboe? . . . or six strings, maybe? But, no. Really, it's useless to me now . . .

Carla Bley isn't interested in writing for the 3/4 kind of form again – not in the foreseeable future, anyway. 'I wanna write for my band. Six horns and four rhythm. And that, for me, is just great.'

How long did it take her to get

though anyone that's done one-nighters for ten years, for no money or something, there's one helluva lotta work involved.'

No doubting one thing about Carla Bley: hers is a total involvement in music, and hers is a family life of music. 'My whole family are musicians. Mike (Mantler), my husband, writes and plays. We have a daughter, Carrie – she's 16 – who writes and plays. We all write and play, from morning to night. Carrie's made a record for us. She's a composer, mostly – writes great stuff. Plays a little bit of everything – but plays nothing very well at all.'

'She's writing now very discip-

Not surprisingly, perhaps, CARLA BLEY wrote her first opera when she was eight . . . Charles Fox appreciates her roots, from childhood to now – and, along the way, discovers some intriguing musical influences.



JACK KERRY

exactly the sound she has perfected over the years?

'I got it from the moment I was born – six months old, in my crib! And I've never wanted less and more than that. Sometimes, I think of having a guitar-player, or maybe an extra percussionist. But, simply, I can't afford it. I mean, ten is hard enough – I could never afford eleven or more. But I've always wanted exactly that sound. I've got it, and I'll never change it.'

'Life is so short. If I can continue to perfect the *orchestration* side of things . . . boy, I'll really have done something . . .'

Touring is something musicians either love or loathe. For one as involved in all aspects of her band's workings, for Carla Bley, there are three or four times more hassles, problems, and possible cases of aggro. She used to find touring a pain in the ass. Now, things are different; there is something remotely approaching same-as-usual.

'But there's no such thing as "usual" in my life! I've had a band for five years now. For the first year, I did one tour. For the second year, I did two tours – Italy, France, Switzerland and Norway, and whatever . . . Mixed tours. And I lost a lotta money on both.'

'The next year, I did three – I also lost a lotta money. The fourth year, I did four – and, wow, I actually started making money! But it was an investment in the band. Actually, we should – logically – make up for this by our record sales. That's the other side of our business . . .'

'But you can't give in. Even

lined songs – all quite long, with a definite orchestration in mind. Carrie will be recorded on a subsidiary label – it's gonna be called Sub-Watt. She plays all her instruments on the record, and I play a saxophone solo on it, too. C-melody saxophone. It's a wonderful instrument. Because tenor's a little too heavy for me, and I don't have that big lungs. Never liked alto – never liked the sound. It's more piercing and it often sounds sharp. C-melody was perfect. And just the right size.'

The coalescing of private and professional life never has been a problem for Carla Bley. Her love for jazz began at 18. 'I didn't want to leave anything else for about five years!'. And her life-style became shaped by jazz musicians. 'I lived with Paul Bley before I married him. Obviously, he exerted an even stronger jazz influence. But all my boyfriends were musicians, too.'

Could she have possibly, in her wildest schoolgirl imagination, have dreamed that all the extraordinary things that have happened to her would actually take place?

'No! Of course not. For one thing, I never finished school – I dropped out at 15. I thought, then, my life was ruined. That I'd have to be a waitress for the rest of my life. And sometimes I cannot believe I'm not a waitress – I have to pinch myself every day!'

'But I'm not, and I don't do anything but write music. And I support myself doing it. It's wonderful. If I were to die tonight, I'd be happy . . .'

Acknowledgements to Kate Perry (Import Music Service).

Coincidence often plays a larger part in human affairs than the laws of probability will allow. Arthur Koestler has even written a book about the subject. And it certainly seems intriguing that, at the age of eight, Carla Bley wrote a little opera which she called *Over The Hill*. 'It wasn't until well after *Escalator Over The Hill* had been written and recorded,' she says, 'that the significance of the title struck me.'

That early attempt at composing came about, she goes on, because her home – in Oakland, California – was full of manuscript paper that needed filling up.

She was born Carla Borg into a family that had come to the US from Sweden. Her father was a piano teacher ('For the first six years of my life I heard nothing but badly played scales!'). She sang in a local choir ('There was no Bach, but plenty of hymns like "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and "There Is Power, Power, Power In The Blood"'). A little later, she heard a different sort of gospel music – on records by black vocal quartets with names like The Silver Sons of Jesus.

For a time, she listened to cowboy songs, then to the organist at a local roller-skating rink. Her acquaintance with classical music was restricted to hearing her father play piano pieces by Chopin and Liszt, Grieg and Beethoven. She points out that Michael Mantler – her husband and a fellow composer – had a very different upbringing: 'He was in Vienna and heard the great masters from the start. But I just listened to all these kinds of

peculiar minority musics.'

The first jazz group she encountered in the flesh was the Lionel Hampton band ('They played "Flying Home"'), followed soon afterwards by Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker ('I was 15 at the time and I really started liking their music a couple of years later'). She arrived in New York too late to hear Charlie Parker, but she caught Miles Davis at the Café Bohemia. Then, in order to get closer to jazz, she worked in various clubs: as a cigarette girl at Birdland, a cloakroom girl at Basin Street, selling woolly rabbits at The Jazz Gallery.

In 1957, she married her first husband – the Canadian-born pianist, Paul Bley – and very soon began writing tunes for him to play. She thinks the first was 'O Plus 1' which Paul Bley included on *Solemn Meditation*. Another early composition (recorded by Jimmy Giuffrè as well as Paul Bley) was 'Ictus', its structure – the intervals, the rhythms – already characteristic of what Carla was to go on going. Art Farmer even named an LP after one of her tunes, *Sing Me Softly Of The Blues*, while George Russell recorded 'Zig Zag' and 'Bent Eagle'.

'I used to write pieces with particular musicians in mind, then try to get them to play them,' Carla recalls, 'I did songs for Cannonball and for Sonny Rollins, but they never used them. After that, I waited for people to ask me.'

Although Carla had worked in a trio and quartet in Los Angeles, she never thought of herself as a performer. But in 1964, she joined a band led by drummer Charles Moffett (shortly afterwards he was to work in the trio led by his boyhood friend, Ornette Coleman) which included Pharoah Sanders. 1964 was also the year which saw the recording of 'Roast', Carla's earliest composition for an orchestra ('The first and only performance, a total mess – a 20-minute work recorded in 20 minutes!'). That was released on an LP by the Jazz Composers' Orchestra – an offshoot of the Jazz Composers' Guild, a self-help, musicians' co-operative of which Carla Bley and Michael Mantler were founder-

members.

The first real evidence of Carla's qualities as a composer, however, appeared in *A Genuine Tong Funeral*, subtitled 'Dark Opera Without Words', recorded by the Gary Burton Quartet augmented by Gato Barbieri, Jimmy Knepper, Steve Lacy, Howard Johnson, Mantler and Bley. Burton was looking for something that would make a concept album (concept albums were the fashionable thing in 1967) and Steve Swallow told him about the piece Carla Bley was writing. 'Burton asked if he could see the work,' Carla says, "'Of course not!'" I told him. Then, a week later, I started examining the possibilities for my future. I decided I really would have to make some compromises. So I called him back. Anyway, it was the first LP that wasn't a utilitarian thing; it was something I wrote for myself.'

It also marked the emergence of what now seems very obviously to be Carla Bley's orchestral manner. At the same time, her use of heavy brass textures, and a persistent hint of parody, caused some reviewers – including the present writer – to discern the influence of Kurt Weill, whose collaborations with Bertolt Brecht had involved caricatures (rather than pastiches) of Twenties'

popular music. That resemblance was to surface again in works such as *Escalator Over The Hill* and on the LP by Charlie Haden's Liberation Music. Carla denies any direct influence. Carla had heard *The Threepenny Opera* and liked it. But a more likely influence, she suggests, would be Erik Satie ('I recorded his "Parade" on my first tape-recorder – and for a long time it was almost the only music I listened to'). Yet a much more potent stimulus, she insists, was neither German, nor French, but English. That was the Beatles' records of *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour* which steered her in the direction of European-based music as distinct from music with African roots.

Escalator Over The Hill demands an entire essay to itself. The highly opaque libretto by Paul Haines (he was in India at the time, 'living a crazy life while I was living a normal life') suggested a narrative that was decidedly lateral rather than linear. And the work signalled the introduction of singers, a fairly logical step for somebody with Carla Bley's theatrical instincts. Yet she shares with Brecht a distaste for professional vocalists, preferring – in her case – to use musicians to sing the parts. Most noticeably of all, *Escalator* mixed various

idioms.

Those of us who happen to be self-educated are usually quick to spot other auto-didacts. While many of us view that kind of empirical approach as having special value, she perceives disadvantages in it.

'I will probably never stray far beyond what I do,' she says, 'People who are more educated do more things. They can use strings, for example. When I have to include string parts I get Mike Gibbs to score them for me.'

There is an obvious strength to be gained from working inside fairly narrow limits. Yet it can also lead to mannerisms and repetition, just as Carla Bley's theatrical flair – her instinct for making a live performance entertaining – upsets some concertgoers.

Some of these things come off: the deliberately casual drum solo, that deliciously macabre song 'Murder' (not, alas, on record up to now); the kind of items to be found on *Fictitious Sports* issued in 1981 (Harvest SHSP 4116) under the name of Nick Mason – the drummer with Pink Floyd – yet using a Carla Bley group and with all the pieces composed by her. But while frivolity is always welcome – indeed, an essential part of any serious enterprise – jokes can misfire. 'Reactionary Tango' (on *Social Studies*) is in three parts, yet each of them, except for the solos, is identical – which presumably explains the title. And the composition gets presented in concert with mock solemnity.

'It was a mistake not to record that "live",' Carla says, 'In most places, people fall about laughing. But in England nothing happened at all. Everyone thought it was a serious piece.'

Not the least remarkable of Carla Bley's virtues is her ability to organise, creating not only the music but handling the practical details of recording, even arranging publicity and the distribution of LPs. She sees nothing odd about this. Organising, she suggests, should come naturally to a composer, for it is the whole point of what he or she is up to. And a similar kind of practicality really underlays her decision to become her sort of composer. She had been touring Europe in the Sixties – leading a group of free improvisers – only to become weary of the rambling, long-winded approach adopted by most of her colleagues. 'You could say I turned into a composer in order to provide some kind of form for avant-garde players to work inside,' she says.

For some while now, she and Michael Mantler have been putting recordings out on their own

label, Watt. That name has several connotations: a unit of electricity; the title of a novel by Samuel Beckett (one of Mantler's artistic heroes); what is almost a reference to a suburb of Los Angeles – the scene of much musical and political activity; and, not least in significance, a pun upon a word that itself signifies mystification. That kind of overlaying of meanings appeals to Carla Bley. She is not superstitious, but she does acknowledge the value of both the happy accident and the curious coincidence. Arthur Koestler might even have collected one of the latter.

She mentioned it after I had commented upon the similarity between 'Copyright Royalties' (piece included in *Social Studies*) and 'Mood Indigo'. She agreed; indeed, she had felt the same immediately after writing the piece. At that time she was unaware that 'Mood Indigo' is credited to three composers. One is Duke Ellington, of course; another is Irving Mills, whose only involvement in composition (so the late Denis Preston once assured me) was thinking up a few titles. But the third man, who was in fact responsible for the actual melody, was Barney Bigard. Carla Bley discovered that the morning after writing her piece – when the radio gave the news of Bigard's death.

Most of the quotations used in this piece come from a lengthy interview carried out in the autumn of 1981. The author hopes this will eventually be broadcast on Radio Three.

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OF THE YEAR



Keith JARRETT



Tim Mosen

tions of some ancient Moorish scale can suddenly give way to some raunchy rock & roll. Keith Jarrett's music is primeval and futuristic at the same time. Remarkable. He constantly delights and surprises you with the breadth of his creativity – the scope of his musical imagination. His vision is limitless. Not for nothing has he been described as the most influential pianist since Monk.

Jarrett is a somewhat enigmatic figure – in other words, in interviews he doesn't give much away. He comes from that 'other world' – separate from mere mortals – of the Mozart-mould, child-prodigy phenomenon. Born Philadelphia in 1945; piano lessons three years later; performing his own tunes solo at the age of seven – the usual stuff. At 16, Jarrett was regularly presenting programmes of his own works, and toured with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians – described as an 'all-encompassing musical organisation'.

In 1963, a scholarship took him to Berklee School of Music but he dropped out after a year and moved to New York where he 'starved for about five months, sitting at home and playing the drums ...'.

His early attempts at live work was a short-lived trio, allegedly alongside a 'Saudi Arabian drummer and bass-player from Connecticut'. By 1965, he was to be found sitting-in at Birdland and the Village Vanguard; when Art Blakey heard him, Jarrett became a Jazz Messenger for three months.

In February the following year, Jarrett was working as a cocktail-bar pianist when Charles Lloyd breezed through on the eve of his European debut tour, inviting Jarrett along. Over the next three years, Jarrett toured Europe six times with Lloyd, covering 18 countries, including the Soviet Union (who loved it, if the audience-response on the album *Charles Lloyd in the Soviet Union* – Atlantic Super 2400 108 – is any indication).

In 1969, Jarrett formed a classic trio with Charlie Haden and Paul Motian (the extraordinary compatibility is well evident on *Somewhere Before* – Atlantic Jazzlore SD 8808).

The next year, Miles Davis was frequently dropping by to listen to Jarrett, urging him to join the Davis line-up. Apparently, Jar-

rett resisted at first because of his own commitments, but eventually agreed to record with Miles. Their resulting collaboration is well-documented on Miles' *Live Evil* (revel in Jarrett's electric-piano solo on the 'Funky Tonk' track!), *Bitches Brew* and *At Fillmore*.

In 1971, Jarrett got a taste for his current obsession with solo performance, recording *Facing You* for Manfred Eicher's ECM label (ECM 1017). Jarrett's style and Eicher's 'technics' could have been made for each other, and they've stuck together for over ten years. Although Jarrett subsequently returned to the trio format (with Dewey Redman) for a couple of years, it is finally as a soloist – on acoustic piano – that he now prefers to record, apart from occasional sojourns into the studio with the likes of Jan Garbarek and Co.

To say that as a soloist he has recorded 'prolifically' is almost an understatement. Imagine anyone else having the nerve to release 20 sides of pure improvisation as one set (*Sun Bear Concerts* – ECM 1100) and getting away with it. (I'm still saving up the forty-quid for it!)

Jarrett's recorded projects are often a personal revelation – like his album dedicated to G. I. Gurdjieff (*Sacred Hymns* – ECM 1174). Or just plain intriguing – like the digitally recorded, double *Imitations/The Moth and the Flame* (ECM 1201-02). On that last, we find Jarrett somewhere in the depths of Ottobeuren Abbey at the pipe organ and on soprano sax. Extraordinarily gloomy – if stirring.

Despite Jarrett's undeniably significant contribution to Miles' ground-breaking electric-jazz period, these days he defends the acoustic piano as though Fender Rhodes had never been invented. He actually is on record (literally – on the liner notes to his *Solo Concerts* set on ECM 1035-37), saying: 'I am, and have been, carrying on an anti-electric-music crusade ...'.

Keith Jarrett is a man as full of contradictions as, perhaps, his music is by design. But, in my book, Jarrett is a genius, encapsulating all that's ancient and modern, and all-that's still to come.

He must be – I wouldn't have gone to the horrendous Barbican Theatre to hear anyone else.

KEITH JARRETT: *Concerts/Bregenz* (ECM 1227)

Recorded: Festspielhaus Bregenz, Austria – 28th May, 1981.

Side One: 'Part I'. Side Two: 'Part II'/'Untitled'/'Heartland'. Keith Jarrett (solo piano).

This is the latest Jarrett live album – a two-sider issued as a 'taster' to a forthcoming, weighty three-album set, *Keith Jarrett/Concerts* (ECM 1227-29), which will additionally capture him in Munich, June 1981.

'Part I' extends across the whole of Side One, fading out then irritatingly fading up on Side Two for ten minutes, but it couldn't be helped. Editing is something you don't do to Jarrett. Indeed, it's difficult to decide just where you could have edited it, as the piece progresses typically through so many interdependent moods and styles.

'Part I' and 'Part II' is a continuous journey through the entire Jarrett book. It's almost a compilation of rearranged quotes from, for instance, the classic 1974 *Belonging* (ECM 1050) – a bit of 'As Long As You Know You're Living Yours' into a snatch of 'Solstice' with a touch of 'Blossom' ... You can additionally pick out hints of American folk and country blues à la Ry Cooder or, even, Little Feat.

Jarrett characteristically uses the concert as a wide canvas, going from some heavy action-painting in oils (on 'Part II') into the subtlest transparent tints of water-colour (see 'Heartland', with its warm, patriotic feel). The more metronomic 'Untitled' has a Northern European flavour – delivered with such fervour the piano must have shifted at least a foot.

There is an enduring sense of reassuring familiarity on this album which could almost be sub-titled 'Variations on Jarrett Themes', but what marvellous themes and what inspired harmonies – complete with his infectious yelps and grunts of delight at some unexpected chordal discovery.

I don't expect anything less than brilliance from Keith Jarrett – in that respect, this album doesn't disappoint. It's an invaluable example of the hallowed place to which Jarrett has elevated solo keyboard improvisation. I can't wait to hear the triple. CM

KEITH JARRETT has emerged as one of the most influential pianist-composers of the age.

With Jarrett's recent solo concert appearance in London, and the release of his latest live album, *Chrissie Murray* looks at the career of this wholly original musician.

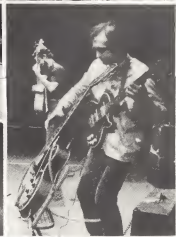
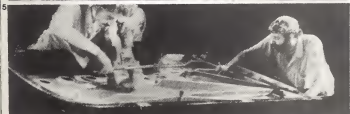
How many solo musicians do you listen to for three hours solid with no reservations? Personally, I can single out three – Gary Burton, Cecil Taylor and ... Keith Jarrett.

An evening of solo Keith Jarrett – as on his recent London date – is a demanding experience for anyone; for some, I believe, it's an acquired taste. But Jarrett is such a supreme improviser-composer that he holds me captivated and enthralled as the seconds tick away into hours which, at the end, seem like mere minutes.

Jarrett is a fascinating character, able to draw on a seemingly inexhaustible source of influences and traditions which denies any categorisation. With Jarrett, you'll hear down-home blues right next to the European classical tradition as satiated by – say – Delius, Debussy or Satie; sedate lines of plainsong can crop up alongside hot gospel; explorations

PICTURES BY JAK KILBY

1. Dennis Charles and Billy Bang. 2. Paul Borzell.
3. Rudiger Carl and Irene Schweitzer. 4. The John
Streets Project; l to r: Wall Gaines, Alan Tomlinson,
Jon Corbett, Paul Rutherford. 5. Jon Rose and Greg
Goodman. 6. The Willem Breuker Kollektief. 7. Peter
Casah and Max Eastley. 8. Joe Sackes and Uwe
Kropinsky.



PICTURES BY JAK KILBY



1. Abdullah Ibrahim. 2. David Beaton of Lester Bowie's band. 3. Elvin Jones. 4. Moté Muse; Lito: Beale, Coxhill, Stubbins, Watts. 5. Maggie Nichols and Julie Tappett. 6. Lester Bowie. 7. Richard Davis.

CAPITAL

1982

PICTURES BY JAK KILBY

1. Carmen McRae. 2. Ray Charles. 3. Al Gray. 4. Carol Kenyon and Tim Mullen. 5. Lionel Hampton and Arnett Cobb. 6. Frank Foster. 7. Tony Williams. 8. Wynon Marlette and Wallace Davenport - backstage.



5 1



6



6



7



3



8



7 4



Phil

PHIL SEAMEN was something very special to the jazz world. A wonderful drummer and an amazing character who leaves an indelible memory with those who heard him and played with him.

Ten years after his death, the fund of 'Phil Seamen stories' are frequently exchanged – most of them very funny, some of them painfully sad.

Those who didn't know Phil, but made a point of getting to his gigs, can visualise the gaunt figure incongruously setting up his drums in Manchester Cathedral for a Freddie Hubbard date; behind Tubby, Don Rendell, Stan Robinson or whoever at Tooley Street and Islington; anchoring the 'Free Form' adventures of Joe Harriott's beautiful band in Sixties' venues like the Marquee; creating musical havoc with Roland Kirk in Ronnie's, oblivious of the police arriving en masse.

Behind the kit – head cocked, eyes closed – the inevitable cigarette drooping from his mouth, driving the band from the guvnor's seat.

There may be a danger of turning his memory into some kind of myth – a British 'Bird Lives' fable – but, fortunately, Phil left you in no doubt that he was dealing with a real bloke.

Here, four musicians who knew and played with Phil, remember the man who would announce to the house – 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the next number is what we call a shirt-raiser . . .'

'... some great drumming, every night'



Phil was 'resting' at home when Graham handed in his – and Jack & Ginger's – notice to quit Blues Incorporated. They were going to form the Graham Bond Organization. So, with Art Themen replacing Graham on alto, we only had to find a drummer and a bass player.

Wild as the dream may have appeared to be at the time, we sent Phil a telegram asking him to ring as soon as possible. He did and we persuaded him to join the band. Twenty-four hours later he arrived on our doorstep since Bobbie, my wife, had agreed that we should put him up until he could find a place of his own in town.

Life was never quite the same again . . .

Visions of this raggedy, shambling figure almost nosediving into the pavement as he tried to zip up his anorak.

Visions of a newspaper which seemed to mumble silently at you across the kitchen table as it slowly caught fire . . . a glowing cigarette had bored its way through the centre pages . . . (Phil nodding off with a cigarette in his mouth and then, angrily, denying that he had).

Playing all-nighters at the Flamingo with the drums getting sparser and sparser and finally stopping altogether. Once again, Phil had nodded off. We would carry him into the bedroom and continue the set. Ten minutes later, a great flurry of sound from the kit. Phil is back with us again. Through it all, some great drumming every night.

And, all the while he lived with us, we rarely saw him eat anything other than his own repulsive concoction of porridge with a Dairy Flake bar crumbled into it. Hot bubbling mud!

One evening, some months after Phil had moved to his own

place, our family was sitting in front of the TV. Among the commercials there was one for porridge. 'Oh, Mum,' said Nico – he was about eight at the time – 'I wouldn't touch that stuff. Look at what it did to Phil!'

Alexis Korner

'Pure Phil, chaos, laughter, brilliance.'



When I heard of Phil's death I felt fury more than anything – the fact that a wonderful man was snatched from us. I just kept thinking, could it be possible that I would not ever have the joy of seeing and hearing him again? I realise, of course, that this was a purely selfish reaction but I adored him and if you've felt that for anyone, you'll know what I mean. Well, after ten years, I still get that feeling of 'Jesus Christ' – the feeling you get when you've been with a true Great because, quite often, he comes into my thoughts and it never is a downer. I am either laughing at some comment of his, like – 'Playing with him is like trying to row through a sea of Mars bars', or thinking of Phil the Jazz Drummer. Well, to be honest, recently I've been listening to the Drummer and, make no mistake, he was the 'Guvnor'. I realise that more and more each day, and realise that, at the time I played with him ('an up-and-coming young bassist' – *Melody Maker*), I was so in awe of this giant whose time and immense power could scare the life out of you, that I missed the true quality of his playing – the control, facility, the passion and the incredible sound and also the fact that he was always aware of everything happening around him, pushing, complimenting and inspiring you to play better; also very aware off the stand.

A mate of mine saw Phil in Ronnie's and ignored him, thinking him too pissed. Next day he said, 'Hello Phil' which got the

rebut, 'Fuck off – you didn't want to know last night'. Any man that can be addicted to heroin and, at the same time, drink large Pernods non-stop, then do a great gig, then make love, is something powerful indeed. And so I sit and listen and think, 'Bloody hell, just cop that'. For every bass-player there's a drummer – well, for me, he was IT.

Phil was the man who said to me, 'You don't know the changes but you've got time and sound; you can always learn the fuckin' rest'. For me, his time and sound was pure African, a triplet feel and that sound that makes you want to go to war – you know the one that drives army officers mad? Well, at a time when music is becoming dominated by sheer technique and amazing chops with a clinical 2,4,6,8 feel, you can't blame me for thinking – Come back, Phil.

I clearly remember the first time I saw Phil. It was at the Flamingo Club, Wardour Street. I was about 16 at the time and had gone to see the Tubby Hayes Quartet (another 'Guvnor'). Well, Tubby delayed his set as Phil hadn't arrived hut, after further delay, decided to play without drums. About halfway through the first number, someone could be heard shouting, 'I'm 'ere Tuhs – couldn't get a fuckin' cab', then shoving his way through the packed club, getting his snare, stool and hi-hat, then – while sitting down, with people passing bits of kit – playing time on the hi-hat then bass drum, gradually building the kit around himself to vast applause. He would be fully set up by the end of the piano solo to take 'four's' into the final chorus. Pure Phil, chaos, laughter, brilliance. Well, after an intro like that, I was hooked for ever. Unfortunately, I was packed away into the army for three years, two of which was spent in Malaya, and so consequently I got out of touch with the British jazz scene. But on return to England, and getting into the Tubby Hayes Student Orchestra which opened the door for me as far as getting on the jazz scene was concerned, I was able to hear at first hand most of the stories which are part of the legend but, more important for me, it was Phil who asked me to play in his quartet and what an apprenticeship that was.

After three years with Alexis Korner's Blues Inc. which, in itself, was an important part of my training, I thought I was ready for

the 'big one'. How wrong I was. I'm still years behind the standard Phil laid down but I owe an enormous amount to the way he cursed me, pushed me and kissed me. Christ, I can feel him now – he could shatter you if you thought you were Jack the Lad, and make you feel bigger than Mingus if you were down. There are many famous stories, funny and otherwise, about Phil that I won't dwell on but a couple I will tell.

One was during my infancy in the quartet. We'd been to Manchester and done a gig and were on our way to London when Phil had to stop for a fix. We pulled up so he could take his shot and I held his torch in the back seat for him to find the spot. At that moment, a PC came by and looked in the window and said something like – 'What's goin' on here? Get out of that car. I'm arresting you' etc etc... To which Phil said, 'Oh, fuck off. I've had more cold turkey than you've had hot dinners'. Obviously, he was registered as an addict and the poor PC had to get on his bike.

Another big one for me was when we were working with Freddie Hubbard (Phil said to me, 'What are you worried about? He's only another bloke') who was full of clenched-fist Black Power etc. He kept making a big deal of it on the stand and, on this occasion, he was telling the audience to be aware of the fact, 'This is not rock & roll; this is Modern American Music'... preach, rant, rave etc which was cut short by Phil saying profoundly, 'Shut your fuckin' cake 'ole', leading to immense laughter and breakdown of heavy vibe and consequently creating the perfect atmosphere for a great gig.

I'll wait for the magazine to do a feature dwelling purely on the funny side of Phil and his quips, to add a few more. Meanwhile, I'll content myself with the knowledge that I knew the complete Phil – a brilliant, funny, sad and perfect gentleman (mad about fishin' and cricket – could have got a county cap).

The last time I saw him he was suited-up, with a lady on his arm, in a musician's club in Soho. He looked better than I'd seen him for a while and was full of his usual exuberance. There was a glow about him, similar to that of an expectant mother. I can't really explain it but, when I think of it, maybe we were being privileged to one last look at Phil

before being snatched for whatever reason best known to the Almighty. But I am left with the sublime feeling of being close to an absolute wonder of a man.

Yes, he was addicted to heroin for a large part of his life.

Yes, he was a comic as funny as Cleese and the rest.

Yes, he was a great drummer – as great as the rest and...

Yes, I adored him.

Danny Thompson

His moment was 'Now,' on and off the stand



Jack Kirby

I first saw and heard Phil playing in the early Fifties with the Jack Parnell Orchestra – at what was then the Chiswick Empire – having been attracted to jazz (through the radio and older friends) shortly before. The experience of the music live was a revelation, especially being lucky enough to see Phil so early on in my own musical development. Phil became a constant inspiration (which lasted beyond his death in 1972); for instance between 1959 and 1962, while I was stationed in Germany with an RAF regional band, my leave would consist of getting back to London to see my parents and friends etc, and as soon as possible making a bee-line for a Phil Seamen gig.

Phil is one of my favourite all-time musicians, and probably my biggest influence instrumentally. He was an absolute player, truly applying himself to the job at hand squeezing every possible ounce of creativity from a musical situation, without his contribution being at the expense of others, in fact the very opposite. His moment was 'Now,' on and off the stand, combining a positive direction with sensitivity, plus being free in spirit as well as a natural teacher.

Like many complete artists he could be unintentionally scary and intimidating, with a larger-

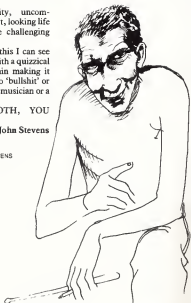
than-life personality, uncompromised and honest, looking life straight in the eye challenging himself and you.

As I am writing this I can see him staring at me with a quizzical smile and once again making it impossible for me to 'bullshit' or avoid the issue, as a musician or a human being.

PHIL, AS BOTH, YOU WERE GREAT.

John Stevens

DRAWINGS BY JOHN STEVENS



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Phil's virtues far outweighed his vices



I can't remember when I first met Phil. It seems as though I knew him all my musical life.

He was a marvellous musician with a great sense of humour and, although he never suffered fools gladly, he seemed to generate tremendous affection in most of the people he came in contact with – be they fools or not.

There are a million anecdotes still told about Phil – some apocryphal, some comic, some tragic;

most are a mixture of all three. I know most of them but I think that Phil's virtues far outweighed his vices, and I can't bring myself to tell one of those 'funny' stories about Phil. He warrants something more serious.

To me – and we worked together many times – he was a superb drummer who set a musical example to every aspirant who heard him. He was an original voice.

In appearance, he looked – to me – to bear a striking resemblance to Dame Edith Evans, but I'd never dare tell him so.

He was a completely dedicated musician who could display a rapier-like wit, and nothing ever seemed to faze him.

Underneath the façade that we all wear (knowingly or unknowingly), Phil was a warm, tragic man who was good to be with.

He was a keen fisherman and a regular subscriber to the *Angler's Weekly*.

Phil Seaman was a unique presence who will always be missed.

Ronnie Scott

As promised in our first issue, we are pleased to present this previously unpublished Eric Dolphy discography, compiled by ERIK GERRITSEN. We would welcome any additions or expansions from readers for future inclusion in *The Wire*.

DOLPHY DISCOG – RAPHY PART 1

This discography is by no means complete or exhaustive, but this has not been the aim. The compiler thought it would be informative and useful to assemble a list of Eric Dolphy's recordings for the enthusiast rather than the compulsive collector, who has probably made the effort to obtain every single recording anyway.

Dolphy was used as a session musician many times, in both small and large aggregations, where his multiple talents were seldom used to full advantage, if at all, and it remains a tragedy that he was not given more opportunity to record under his own name. Although this is the case, passing reference has been made to all the known recordings in which Dolphy participated. Some of the entries had him soloing only once in their entirety, and some not at all, but are included anyway, for whatever reasons.

Not all of the recordings listed are easily obtained, but all are – or have been – in one form or another available in Britain within the past two years. Some would be easier to obtain in Europe or the United States. The Japanese recordings are mostly pressed only once, and if you don't buy them when you see them: tough luck. Mostly it's being in the right place at the right time.

All detailed entries are given with the original number (where known) after the main title heading, and are available as such, unless otherwise stated. Nearly all the Japanese albums use the original US numbers.

There are apparently many tapes still extant of radio broadcasts, made mainly in Europe, which have never been made publicly available.

Acknowledgement goes to Barry Tepperman and *Down Beat* magazine. Grateful thanks to Anthony Wood, Stephen Barrow and David Hogan.



BIG BOOST FOR NATIONAL JAZZ CENTRE

The Jazz Centre Society's National Jazz Centre Project in Covent Garden recently gained a £100,000 loan from the Musicians Union, which was formally presented at the recent Floral St. press reception. The occasion also celebrated the lease presentation from the GLC. On hand were (l to r) John Morton (MU), Tony Banks (GLC), George Faine and Humphrey Lyttelton.

Further information about the Fund Raising Programme from the JCS (01-580 8532).

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Eric Dolphy first recorded with Roy Porter's 17 Beboppers, late 1948-49. These recordings are available in a double album called *Black California* (Savoy SJL 2215), and take up one side of the album. Although Dolphy is credited with solos on three of the tracks, it is in fact the band's resident soloist, Leroy 'Sawtooth' Robinson, who is responsible for these solos. They do sound much as one might expect Dolphy to sound at this time, very Parkerian, but already displaying distinctive phrasing leading one to conjecture if perhaps Dolphy influenced Robinson, or vice versa. Anyway, don't be fooled by either the cover or the liner notes to this album, but buy it just the same.

For some period in the Fifties, Dolphy was with the Gerald Wilson Orchestra, and with Eddie 'Bea's' combo, as well as leading his own groups in and around Los Angeles. He joined the Chico Hamilton Quintet early in 1958, and participated in seven or eight sessions in the year-and-a-half with this group. The two most important are:

CHICO HAMILTON QUINTET: GONGS EAST (Warner Bros WS1271; Los Angeles, Calif. 29.30.12.1958).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, cl, bcl); Nathan Gershman (cel); Wyatt Ruther (bs); Dennis Budimir (tr); Chico Hamilton (dr).

[Long Ago & Far Away; I Gave My Love a Cherry; Beyond the Blue Horizon; Nature by Emerson; Tuesday at Two; Gongs East; Far East; Good Grief, Dennis; Passion Flower; Where I Live.

[Dolphy does not solo on these selections.

This is easily the best representation of Dolphy's playing at this time. His contribution brought a more impassioned edge to the sound of the Hamilton group, which was popular, but played cool, rather than 'chamber jazz'. This is possibly the best record this group ever made. Well worth getting hold of, but extremely difficult to do.

CHICO HAMILTON QUINTET: THAT HAMILTON MAN (Sesac Repertory N2901 2902; LA, Calif. 19.20.5.1959).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bcl); Nathan Gershman (cel); Wyatt Ruther, Ralph Pena (bs); Dennis Budimir (tr); Chico Hamilton (dr).

[Truth; Openings; Fat Mouth; Theme for a Starlet; Little Lost Bear; Champs Elysees; Lost in the Night; Frou Frou; Lullaby for Dreamers; Caww Pawa; Lady E.

[Dolphy does not solo on these selections.

There is one other selection on this album, 'Pretty Little Theme', from which Dolphy is entirely missing. This is not a bad album, and since it is the only album from this period in Dolphy's career which is currently available in Britain, it should not be overlooked. Available on French Vogue JL 67, number 17 in a series entitled Jazz Legacy.

Also available is an album by Hamilton, one in a German series called *That's Jazz* (Warner Bros/Atlantic K56239), which includes some tracks featuring Dolphy, plus tracks by a later group featuring Charles Lloyd.

Dolphy left Hamilton in New York around late 1959-early 1960. He did a session, buried in a large ensemble (mostly refugees from Count Basie's

band), backing Sammy Davis Jr, which was released on Decca/Brunswick. He is not featured at all.

Gaining something of a reputation at this time, he was signed to Prestige to record his first album as a leader:

ERIC DOLPHY QUINTET: OUTWARD BOUND (Prestige New Jazz NJLP 8236; Hackensack, New Jersey, 1.4.1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bcl); Freddie Hubbard (tp); Jaki Byard (pno); George Tucker (bs); Roy Haynes (dr).

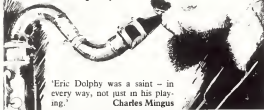
GW, 245; Green Dolphin Street; Glad to be Unhappy; Les, Miss Toni. One other selection, 'April Fool', was recorded at this session, but does not appear here. It was later released on the album *Here & There* (Prestige PR 7382). The above album initially appeared with a surrealist cover painting by Richard Jennings (aka 'The Prophet'), a friend of Dolphy's. Later versions feature a photo of Dolphy, and it is in this form that the album is now available: Prestige PR7311. Japanese imports with the original cover-painting have appeared from time to time at exorbitant prices. It is

'Whatever I'd say would be an understatement. I can only say my life was made much better by knowing him. He was one of the greatest people I've ever known, as a man, a friend, and a musician.'

John Coltrane

'Eric is the only one of all the cats who's captured Bird's true tone.'

Jaki Byard



'Eric Dolphy was a saint - in every way, not just in his playing.'

Charles Mingus

also available as part of a double package entitled *Eric Dolphy* (Prestige PR24008). (Also available on French Prestige 68320). The other half of this package is the album *Out There*.

Outward Bound is a great album, and was released to almost universal acclaim, a prime example of neo-bop.

Dolphy joined the Charles Mingus Jazz Workshop about this time, and one month later, recorded with him for the first time:

CHARLES MINGUS & HIS ORCHESTRA: PRE-BIRD (Mercury MG 20627/SR60627; NY City, 24.25.5.1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bcl); John LaPorta (as, cl); Yusuf Lateef (ts, fl); Robert DiDomenico (fl); Booker Ervin, Bill Barron, Joe Farrell (ts); Danny Bank (bar); Marcus Belgrave, Ted Curson, Hobart Donton, Clark Terry, Richard Williams (tp); Eddie Bert, Charles Greenlee, Slide Hampton, Jammy Knepper (tbn); Don Butterfield (tuba); Harry Shulman (oboe); Roland Hanna, Paul Bley (pno); Charles McCracken (cel); Charles Mingus (bs); Dannie Richmond (dr); Sticks Evans, Max Roach, George Scott (perc); Lorraine Cousins (vf). Half-Mast Inhibition; Mingus Fungus New Tumb; Bemoanable Lady;

Weird Nightmare; Prayer for Passive Resistance; Eclipse; Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me/I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart; Take the 'A' Train/Exactly Like You.

Dolphy here solos on one track only, an alto solo on 'Bemoanable Lady'.

One further track, 'Yusef Isel Too', was also recorded at these sessions, but has never been released. A good deal of the Mercury/Light catalogue has now been reissued on the Trip label. This album is now available as *Mingus Revisited* (Trip TLP5513). (Also available on Japanese Lamlight EXPR 1015.)

Two days later, Dolphy was in the studio with his friend, the arranger/composer/saxophonist Oliver Nelson, for the first of three albums the pair made together:

OLIVER NELSON SEXTET: SCREAMIN' THE BLUES (Prestige New Jazz NJLP8243; Hackensack, NJ, 27.5.1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, bcl); Oliver Nelson (as, ts); Richard Williams (tp); Richard Wyands (pno); George Duvivier (bs); Roy Haynes (dr).



Eric Dolphy

Looking Ahead fetch upwards of fifty dollars in the States.

In July, Charles Mingus took his band to perform at the Antibes Jazz Festival in France. The group was recorded for a radio broadcast, now available as:

CHARLES MINGUS: MINGUS AT ANTIBES (Atlantic SD2-3001; Antibes Jazz Festival, Juan-les-Pins, France, 13/7/1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, bcl); Booker Ervin (ts); Ted Curson (tp); Charles Mingus (bs, pno, cel); Dannie Richmond (dr); Bud Powell (pno).

Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting; Prayer for Passive Resistance; What Love?; I'll Remember April; Folk Funs One; Better Git Hit in Your Soul.

Bud Powell appears only on 'I'll Remember April'. This album is also available as an expensive Japanese import. Selections (very badly recorded) are also available in Britain on the album *Charles Mingus Live* (Affinity AFF19), of which you are advised to steer clear.

Great playing by all concerned, especially Ervin.

The Mingus group resumed its residency at the Showplace in New York, and Dolphy continued his solo recording career.

ERIC DOLPHY: OUT THERE (Prestige New Jazz NJLP 8251; Hackensack, NJ, 15.8.1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bcl); Ron Carter (cel); George Duvivier (bs); Roy Haynes (dr).

Out There; Feathers; The Baron; Serene; Sketch of Melba; 17 West; Eclipse.

In its original version, this album also had a surreal cover painting by 'The Prophet' (available as a Japanese import). Later US versions feature a photo of Dolphy, currently available as Prestige PR7652. This album and *Outward Bound* are also obtainable in a Prestige twofer entitled *Eric Dolphy* (Prestige PR 24008).

Four days later, Dolphy cut an album in the Hackensack studios with:

LATIN JAZZ QUINTET (feat Eric Dolphy): *CARIBE* (Prestige New Jazz NJLP8251; Hackensack, NJ, 19.8.1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bcl); Charles Simmons (vib); Gene Gase (pno); Bill Elington (bs); Manuel Ramos (dr, timbales); Juan Almbert (cong).

Sunday Go Meeting; First Bass Line; Mambo Ruck; Blues in 6/8; Spring is Here; Caribe.

Despite the seemingly incongruous setting, this is rather neat. It is somewhat obscure, but can perhaps still be obtained as a Japanese import, and is well worth the effort. 'Mambo Ruck' is the only tune with a genuine Latin flavour.

During September, Dolphy recorded with John Lewis's Orchestra USA (he was a charter member), and also with an Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis's big band directed by Oliver Nelson. He is not featured on any of these recordings. However, in October, he recorded again with Mingus, producing some tracks which mark an apex in the careers of both men.

CHARLES MINGUS' JAZZ WORKSHOP: CHARLES MINGUS PRESENTS CHARLES MINGUS (Candid CJM8005; NY City, 20.10.1960).

Cont. Page 26

Polphy (as, fl, bc); Ted Curson (tp); Charles Mingus (bs, vc); Dannie Richmond (dr).

Folk Forms Number One; Original Faubus Fabrics; What Love? All Things You Could Be By Now If You Found Freud's Wife Was Your Mother.

Things get rather confusing at this point, hardly surprising where Mingus is concerned. One other track, 'Stormy Weather,' was recorded at this session, but appeared on Mingus' second Candid album. One further track 'MDM,' was also recorded that day, but with a larger group, the listing of which is as follows:

CHARLES MINGUS JAZZ WORKSHOP: STORMY WEATHER. Candid CJM 8021; NY City, 20/10/1960.

Eric Dolphy (as, bc); Ted Curson (tp); Charles Mingus (bs); Dannie Richmond (dr).

Stormy Weather.
Eric Dolphy (as, bc); Charles McPherson (as); Booker Ervin (ts); Ted Curson, Lonnie Hillier (tp); Jimmy Knepper, Britt Woodman (tr); Nico Bunick (p); Charles Mingus (bs); Dannie Richmond (dr); MDM. (NY City, 11/11/1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, bc); Charles McPherson (as); Booker Ervin (ts); Ted Curson, Lonnie Hillier (tp); Paul Bala (p); Charles Mingus (bs); Dannie Richmond (dr).
Lock 'Em Up.

Dolphy does not solo on this last selection.

This album is now available as Barnaby Candid BR6015 and Jazzman JAZ 5002. One other track recorded on 11/11/1960 was 'Vassarlean' (personnel as above, except Nico Bunick on piano), which originally appeared on a Candid sampler called *The Jazz Life!* (now re-released on Barnaby Candid BR5021).

Other tracks recorded on 11/11/1960, with a line-up consisting of some of the 'Newport Rebels,' were released on the album *Charles Mingus Jazz Arns Guild: Newport Rebels* (re-released on Barnaby Candid BR5022). Only two tracks include Dolphy, and he solos on both. One other track 'R&R,' also recorded that day with the Newport Rebels, has only ever appeared on *The Jazz Life!*

'The album *Stormy Weather* (plus "Vassarlean") has also been released as *Mingus: The Candid Recordings* (CBS/Barnaby KZ31034). Phew!

'MDM' is especially noteworthy because Dolphy solos first on alto, and then returns for a bass clarinet solo, also trading fours with Ervin and McPherson.

Later the following month, Dolphy participated in his second recording of 'Third Stream' music:

JOHN LEWIS PRESENTS THE GUNTHER SCHULLER ORCHESTRA: JAZZ ABSTRACTIONS (Atlantic SD1365; NY City, 20/12/1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bc); Ornette Coleman (as); Robert DeMone (fl); Eddie Costa (vib); Bill Evans (p); Charles Libove, Roland Vaznos (vln); Harry Zaratian (vla); Joseph Tekula (cel); George Duvivier, Scott LaFaro (bs); Jim Hall (gtr); Sticks Evans (dr); Gunther Schuller (comp, arr, dr, cond).

Variants on a Theme of John Lewis (Django); Variants on a Theme of Thelonious Monk (Crisis/Cross).

Polphy solos on both of these.

There are two other tracks on this album, neither of which Dolphy appears on. Nevertheless, the album is certainly worth owning, if only for the fact that it is one of the few successful attempts to marry jazz with modern concert music.

The following day found Dolphy back in the Atlantic studio for the ORNETTE COLEMAN DOUBLE QUARTET: FREE JAZZ (Atlantic SD1364; NY City, 21/12/1960).

Eric Dolphy (bc); Ornette Coleman (as); Freddie Hubbard (tp); Don Cherry (pocket-tp); Charlie Haden, Scott LaFaro (bs); Ed Blackwell, Billy Higgins (dr).

Free Jazz (Part One); Free Jazz (Part Two).

This is one of the milestones in the development of Free Jazz, and was immensely influential. The playing by everyone is outstanding.

This album is also available as part of a series called *That's Jazz* (Warner Bros/Atlantic K50240). There is also an earlier, alternative take of 'Free Jazz' available on the Ornette Coleman album *Tune* (Atlantic SD1588/K40278).

The 21/12/1960 was a busy day for Dolphy. Later he headed over to New Jersey to record his next album, which featured his friend, trumpeter Booker Little. Thus:

ERIC DOLPHY QUINTETT: FAR CRY! (Prestige New Jazz NJLP 8270; Hackensack, NJ, 12/12/1960).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bc); Booker Little (tp); Jack Byard (p); Ron Carter (bs); Roy Haynes (dr).

Bird's Mother; Ode to Charlie Parker; Far Cry; Miss Ann; Left Alone; Tenderly; It's Magic.

'Tenderly' is an unaccompanied alto solo, one of two recorded by Dolphy. 'Bird's Mother' is also known as 'Mrs Parker of KC'. One track from this session, 'Serene,' remains unreleased. This album is highly recommended, and is currently available as Prestige 7747, as well as comprising half of a twofold credited to Eric Dolphy/Ron Carter: *Magie* (Prestige PR24053).

An obscure album appears at this stage, another with the Latin Jazz Quintet (NY City, circa late 1960-early 1961): *Unitec* (UAE 4071/UAS 5071), in which the title remains unknown. The line-up of the LJQ in this instance bears no resemblance to that present on their previous effort with Dolphy, and there are apparently some tracks on which Dolphy does not play. He solos on all nine tracks on which he appears, but this album doesn't seem up to the standard of *Caribé*, and is definitely more of a 'Latin' album than the former. Despite this, it is a shame that this album is so little known, especially as there is so little of this type of work by Dolphy.

At the tail end of February, Dolphy once more went into the studio with Oliver Nelson to record one of Nelson's finest albums:

OLIVER NELSON SEXTET: THE BLUES & THE ABSTRACT TRUTH (Impulse AS3; NY City, 23/2/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl); Oliver Nelson (as, bs); Freddie Hubbard (tp); George Barrow (cham); Bill Evans (p); Paul Chambers (bs); Roy

Haynes (dr).
Solos Moments; Hoe-Down; 'Cascades; Yearnin'; Butch & Butch; Teenie's Blues.

{Dolphy does not solo on this track. (Now re-released on Jasmine JAS 20.)}

A week later, another Oliver Nelson album was recorded:

OLIVER NELSON QUINTET, STRAIGHT AHEAD (Prestige New Jazz NJLP8255; Hackensack, NJ, 1/3/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bc); Oliver Nelson (as, bs, cl); Richard Wyands (p); George Duvivier (bs); Roy Haynes (dr).

Six & Four; Mama Lou; Images; Ralph's New Blues; 111-44; Straight Ahead.

'Ralph's New Blues' features one of Dolphy's best recorded bass clarinet solos.

This album is available on Japanese import, and is also available as part of a twofold by Oliver Nelson, *Images* (Prestige PR 24060), together with tracks from *Scream* (the *Blues*).

Later in March, Dolphy took part in a Booker Little session, which produced the over-arranged:

BOOKER LITTLE SEXTET: OUT FRONT (Candid CJXM8027; NY City, 17/3/1961, 4/4/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bc); Booker Little (tp); Julian Priester (tbn); Don Friedman (p); Art Davis, Ron Carter (bs); Max Roach (dr, tympani).

We Speak; Quiet Please; A New Day; Strength & Sanity; Moods in Free Time; Man of Words; Hazy Hues.

{Dolphy does not solo on these selections.

This album is currently available as Barnaby Candid Jazz BR5019.

In April, Dolphy participated in a session for Ted Curson, but he is not featured at all on the two tracks on which he appears. In May, however, he recorded with George Russell, producing a fine album:

GEORGE RUSSELL SEXTET: EZZ-THETICS (Reverse RLP/9375 NY City, 8/5/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, bc); Don Ellis (tp); Dave Baker (tbn); George Russell (p); Steve Swallow (bs); Joe Hunt (dr).

Ezz-thetic; Nardis; Lydnot; Thoughts; Honesty; 'Round Midnight.

A great album, in fact, and well worth owning for the version of 'Round Midnight' which, with Dolphy's terrific contribution on alto, makes it the definitive version!

Available on Japanese import. Tracks from this album plus selections by a later Russell group are available on a twofold entitled *George Russell: Outer Thoughts* (Milestone M47027).

At this time, Dolphy was appearing around New York with the John Coltrane Quartet. The two men were close friends, and collaborated on a number of recordings, the first of which was Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* (Impulse AS6), now re-released by MCA on Jasmine JAS 8. This album revealed for the only time the arranging skills of which Dolphy was capable. He plays in the large ensemble which backs Coltrane, but does not solo. Much later, alternative takes of the material on this album were re-

leased as *The Africa Brass Sessions, Vol 2* (Impulse AS9273), and, more recently, yet more unreleased takes have appeared on the album *The Mastery of John Coltrane: Vol 4 - Than's Mode* (Impulse L295612).

At the same time, Coltrane fulfilled his contractual obligations to Atlantic by recording his last album for the label:

JOHN COLTRANE: OLÉ COLTRANE (Atlantic SD1373; NY City, 25/5/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl); John Coltrane (as, bs); Freddie Hubbard (tp); McCoy Tyner (p); Art Davis, Reggie Workman (bs); Elvin Jones (dr).
Olé; Dahomey Dance; Aasha.

Dolphy appears under the pseudonym 'George Lane', possibly forced on him by his own record company because he was moonlighting for so many other labels at this time.

One other title recorded at this session, 'Original Untitled Ballad', was released on the Coltrane album *Legacy* (Atlantic SD1553). *Olé* is also available on French Atlantic ATL 40286.

In June, Dolphy made an album with Ron Carter.

RON CARTER ERIC DOLPHY QUINTET: WHERE? (Prestige New Jazz NJLP8265; Hackensack, NJ, 20/6/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bc); Ron Carter (cel, bs); Mal Waldron (p); George Duvivier (bs); Charlie Persip (dr).

Rally; 'Bass Drum; Softly as a Morning Sunrise; 'Where?; Yes Indeed; Sauter Eyes.

{Dolphy does not play on these selections.

This album was originally released under Ron Carter's name, but has since been reissued under Dolphy's name with a photo of him on the cover (Prestige 7843). It is also available as one half of a twofold by Eric Dolphy/Ron Carter: *Magie* (Prestige PR 24053), along with the album *Far Cry*.

One week later, it was all on once more:

MAL WALDRON ERIC DOLPHY/BOOKER ERVIN SEXTET: THE QUEST (Prestige New Jazz NJLP8269; Hackensack, NJ, 27/6/1961).

Eric Dolphy (as, fl); Booker Ervin (ts); Mal Waldron (p); Ron Carter (cel); Joe Benjamin (bs); Charlie Persip (dr).

Thirteen; 'Daquility; Status Seeking; Warp & Woolf; Warm Canto; 'Fire Water; We Diddit.

{Dolphy does not solo on these selections.

'Warm Canto' is one of the few tracks extant which features Dolphy on Bb clarinet, and his solo is definitely warm.

This album first appeared under Mal Waldron's name, and has since been reissued as Prestige 7579, with Dolphy's name most prominent. It has also been issued as part of an Eric Dolphy twofold entitled *Fire Water* (Prestige PR 24085), of which the other half is the Ken McIntyre album *Looking Ahead*. (Also available on French Prestige 68330.)

(The second part of this Eric Dolphy discography will be published in Issue 3 of *The Wire*.)

RIP RIG & PANIC

Ripping down the barriers, or building up the hype? Skip Laszlo talks to Rip Rig and Panic's bass-player SEAN OLIVER about the group's musical aims and accomplishments.

To read the rock press these days is to know that John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman are the greatest rediscoveries since unfished bread. For, in between the obligatory cool phrases about who you cats be diggin' these days is a begrudging recognition that a growing audience is being recruited out of the rigidly defined ranks of 'rock fans' for the long-written-off sounds of jazz, free music and acoustical instruments.

Rip Rig and Panic is at the centre of this interest – a group that prefers its live work to recording, and which takes its name from a Roland Kirk track.

While your average rock commentator will deny ever having heard Kirk's name – let alone his music – there are many readers of this magazine who will dismiss Rip Rig and Panic as rock-hype.

It is these musical barriers that the group most wants to break down. 'We all have our own personal aims,' Sean Oliver says of the group but – 'I want to break the mould. Look at the way music is covered in Italy. A music paper covers a wide berth of music; it tells you about jazz and classical and rock. Here, you read about your classical in the *Guardian* and *The Times*, and you read about your jazz... well, you don't read about it except in a few little magazines here and there; maybe *The Times* will write the odd jazz thing when something big happens. It's all split up in sectors.

'We're not in the right market place to reach a lot of the black youth of this city. They don't write about us in *Black Echoes*; they write about us in *New Musical Express*. So we get a certain type of people coming. What

we're trying to do is reach everyone – it's virtually impossible but we keep trying.'

Rip Rig and Panic came together in January 1981 to play a concert at the Primatarium. Its first audience was around 500 people. Although it records with Virgin (LPs are *God* and *I am Cold*), the group prefers to play live. The live format is constantly changing with the stage rarely hosting less than ten musicians.

Until late this summer, the core of the group consisted of Mark Springer (keyboards and tenor), Gareth Sager (reeds, vocals and guitar), Sean Oliver (bass guitar and other stringed instruments), drummer Bruce Smith and Neneh Cherry at the vocal centre. More often than not, Cherry is teamed with Andrea Oliver in both dance and vocal arrangements – a combination that frequently exceeds the sum of its two talented components. The drafted-in musicians usually extend the horn line and add an array of percussion to the format. Cherry and Smith stopped performing with the group in late summer for Neneh to have her baby in Sweden.

So is the band breaking down at least some of the barriers? Oliver thinks so.

'I think a lot of the kids at the Sun Ra gig at the Venue wouldn't have been there if it weren't for us. It may sound cocky to say but I think it's true. I think we have started a new interest in jazz or whatever you want to call it. It will make people go out and start listening to different stuff.'

The group does not, however, feel itself to be part of a new movement of similar bands. They are often quoted slating Pugh, and Oliver is no exception.

'They do what the Stones did to blues – make it easier to take, give a pale-faced version of black music. I don't think we're making it easier to take.' He adds, 'I don't think any of them do it consciously. I just don't think they go further than imitation.' As for the other groups, he says, 'the rock writers don't understand the music. They say, "Oh, this group is playing out of tune; they must

be like Rip Rig and Panic".' Leaving aside the possibility of plain old competitiveness, there is more than a grain of truth in Oliver's point.

As far as he will go in bracketing the group's music is defining its spirit. For him music, from all categories which it is currently slopped into today, lacks a certain spirit.

'The spirit in us is the spirit that someone like Picasso had or Little Richard or John Coltrane. Just because you play jazz doesn't mean you've got the groove, you know. The spirit and energy you give off is what people pick up on in the end.'

'What we play is natural. My influences are mainly tunes from the early Seventies like the Temptations, Smokey Robinson and James Brown. But I listen to Coltrane and that comes through, too. A lot of people who find it difficult to listen to our records find it easier live.'

At the Notting Hill Carnival this year, the group played a slot in between reggae bands. 'When we came on, people went "fuck me, what're they doing?" but then they were brought over by the energy and the spirit.' It was something to watch.

'When we're not happening, it's as honest as you can get. We have no set pieces to fall back on,' Oliver says. Group practice is limited to two or three participating musicians in different combinations. 'We take risks. Sometimes it falls apart and sometimes it works. But we take risks. That's what our music is about.' Doing that in front of untrained audiences adds to the challenge.

'I want to open up everyone's fucking ideas,' says Oliver. 'I think it would be great if we could have a hit record with housewives humming along to one of the tunes and buying the album, and then someone else's, and things opening up. It shouldn't be like it is. The way music is geared now money is the prime motive – not so much to the people making it but with the people who sell it.'

For a band that played its first concert to 500 people – and has had no audience smaller – the

prospect of surviving on pub rooms with 50 people is simply not contemplated. The current goal is to find and test as wide a variety of large audiences as can be found. Oliver thinks this challenge is also open to long-established jazz musicians and he doesn't mean on his group's concert nights.

Before these musicians dismiss this notion as ridiculous, they might like to recall the reception Trevor Watts and Moiré Music got coming on right after Rip Rig and Panic at Bracknell. One observer there said to me, 'I saw Moiré Music at Camden when it was "avant-garde" night – the audience sat and applauded politely. But the kids at Bracknell didn't know this is how you are supposed to behave – they danced to Moiré Music.'

It is certainly nothing new for long-standing jazz musicians to look on young newcomers with a harshly critical eye, tinged with justified jealousy at their popularity. This is exaggerated today when jazz has spent so many lean years in the popular wilderness.

But Oliver retorts, 'They may think, "Here come those upstarts", they think we can get away with things because we play to the uninitiated but, if they stopped listening for the mistakes and listened to the feeling, they might get something out of it.' Oliver also thinks the group is making it easier for long-established jazz-based musicians to play to new and bigger audiences. 'But those musicians don't need us; those who want a bigger audience can use the same people we do.'

The popularity gained by Rip Rig and Panic so far has shown that stepping out of the carefully trained audience situations which so many jazz musicians have been forced to play in, is no longer a guaranteed trip into rock fusion mediocrity. The vitality of free music is proving a match for commercial pop which its protagonists have long claimed but frequently doubted.

Taking up the challenge more forcefully may indeed be a course worth investigating.



The series which looks at the business-end of the music. In this issue, *The Wire* delves into the Affinity catalogue.

AN Affinity FOR JAZZ

Over the last four years, the independent Affinity label has crept on to more and more jazz fans' shelves. The man responsible for Affinity's prolific and wide-ranging output is Joop Visser who, as Stan Britt discovered, is a jazz fan first and a record-company MD second.

Until recently, the history of locally released jazz in this country during the past 20 years had been all too often something of a non-event. Customarily, the majors have simply been shit-scared of the word jazz. They've never really known what to do with it when it has come their way - except, of course, to get decidedly twitchy and use the magic curative word for all such threats - 'Delete!'. All this, despite the brave and noble efforts of a handful of vigilantes - like Chris Ellis (ex-EMI, ex-World Records), David Yeats (ex-RCA, ex-WEA), John Roberts (ex-Selecta... and whatever happened to this nice guy?), Leon Campadella (still with Phonogram - sorry, Polygram!) - at the time of writing, would you believe!, et al.

Today, the situation is extraordinarily changed, with WEA (and Elektra Musician), Island (Antilles) and MCA (odds-and-sods thus far, but y'never know) suddenly evidencing a substantial interest (dare one say, with Island and WEA, an *investment*?) in recorded jazz. Little labels like Kingdom Jazz, and Mole Jazz and Jasmine (all-impulse thus far) have also crept on to the scene.

All of which is so bloody overdue, to make one chortle with cynical disbelief (but chuckle not, tempt Providence at your peril). It certainly brings a dry

simile to the friendly features of Joop Visser of Charly Records.

Since its inception, Charly (the label) has established an enviable reputation in the blues and r&b field - not forgetting classic rock'n'roll material from the past. And when Dutchman Visser entered a partnership with Frenchman Jean-Luc Young in 1975, he was determined that his deep love for jazz (and his record-business involvement with the music in Holland) would be put to substantial use at Charly.

In the beginning, the jazz repertoire for Charly's new label, Affinity, was confined to ex-Byg recordings, most of which Young had either produced and/or been closely associated with, and a little *avant-garde* rock, which was soon transferred to the parent label. ('Why "Affinity"? Purely personal. Although I've been involved in practically all kinds of music, jazz is basically my favourite music. I've always liked to be involved with jazz. "Affinity" covers that involvement very nicely - and, in any case, I liked the sound of the word...').

First (ex-Byg) releases in Britain took place in February 1978 - Archie Shepp's *Blasé* (AFF 7), Art Ensemble of Chicago's *A Jackson In Your House* (AFF 9), Don Cherry's *Mu First Part* (AFF 8) and Sun Ra's *The Solar Myth Approach* (AFF 10).

Right from its first releases, Affinity's guiding light had - bless him - decided on a policy that the product would sound as well as look good. To this end, he commissioned a cover design from Adam Yeldham - all-black laminated sleeves (both sides) with eye-catching white lettering and typeface, with one or two photos - small on the front, larger on the sleeve - to match. And he commissioned liner notes from writers who represent the very best in Britain - including Brian Case, Alan Morgan, Brian Davis, Greg Murphy, Val Wildner and Brian Priestley. Sound-wise, the Affinity reissues of the Byg material were far superior to the sometimes appalling original French albums.

'And,' remembers Joop Visser, 'there was one other record which was what you'd call "jazz-tinged" - the second record we put out on Affinity, a jazz-funk thing by saxist Jimmy Jewel, mostly known for his work on rock and r&b records, and other similar players. It was also the very first recording made specifically for Affinity. Might have turned into an investment for the company. Unfortunately, it didn't happen because the band never got to work - they were all highly paid sessioners, and we would have needed a lot of money to put it on the road'.

General reaction to the first Affinity product was favourable - nothing mind-boggling, mind you, just a hint of promise. Two 'outsiders' were added to the Byg stuff; two fine live dates Joop himself had cut in Holland for EMI - (Ben Webster's *For the Gw'nom*: AFF(D)40, and Dexter Gordon's *Live At the Amsterdam Paradise*: AFF(D)27) - both doubles. With the adrenalin beginning to flow, Affinity's mastermind was looking, listening, remembering... 'Then, we made a deal with an Italian producer for two albums by Gato Barbieri - *Obsession* (AFF 12), *Hamba Khale* (featuring also Dollar Brand - AFF 39). Followed by a really fine capture; we did a deal that enabled us to get amongst the Veejay catalogue - both for Charly as well as Affinity.'



That was 1979. Which meant a different jacket design - larger front-cover pictures with an all-white background, with a distinctive twin grey-purple horizontal band - thick at the top, thin at the bottom - across both sides. With firm promises that there is much to come from Veejay in the future, Joop is pleased that reaction to several superior albums from that source has been favourable - fine sets such as Eric Dolphy's *Musical Matador* AFF 47, Wynton Kelly George Coleman's *In Concert* AFF 54, the pulsating Coleman Octet's *Big Google* 'AFF 52', and *Waltz of the Demons* 'AFF 49, co-featuring Frank Stronach and Birkner Little.

FRANK STRONACH
BIRKNER LITTLE
Waltz of the Demons



The following year, Visser and his Charly blues r&b specialist Cliff White took a trip to Los Angeles to secure a deal with Capitol which meant the reissue of much fine jazz - which the US company has disdained to be-

come involved with again in recent times, sometimes even denying the very existence of some of the material. For lovers of West Coast jazz of the Fifties in particular, the acquisition of release rights to the Capitol catalogue - or at least a healthy percentage of it - was, indeed, a godsend.

Visser himself was familiar with much of the Capitol jazz, having been responsible (together with Simon Kortweg) with compiling - for the Dutch Bovera company - the most coherent Capitol Jazz Classics series (available here through EMI Imports). 'I've always been a Serge Chaloff freak - and that *Boston Blow-Up*! (AFF 63) was a record that I wanted for myself! So, when I suddenly saw the chance of getting release rights to it, I said to myself: "I might as well get the rights to some other things, including the Kenton Presents series"...

Knowing some heavy executive at the parent company (with whom he'd worked at EMI's London HQ) helped negotiations to proceed smoothly. At the same time, through Cliff White's perspicacity, Charly picked up the rights to the classic T-Bone Walker recordings. To no-one's surprise, the T-Bone cuts have proved to be best-selling Capotols. *T-Bone Jumps Again* (Charly CRB 1019) was followed by *Plain Ole Blues* (CRB 1037); and a third volume will appear early next year - making it the first time that all the T-Bones have been issued on LP in such an admirable way.

Naturally, too, Visser is happy to reveal, that the Chaloff album figures among the best-selling Capitol-originated releases thus far. And one perhaps surprisingly popular issue has been Walter Brown's *Confessin' the Blues* (AFF 66), with the late blues singer accompanied by four different small combos, including his old boss, Jay McShann, on two sessions, and Ben Webster on one.

CONFESSIN'
THE BLUES

WALTER
BROWN
WITH THE
JAY
MC SHANN
BAND



Bethlehem, a famous jazz label long since defunct, was the 1981 scalp for Charly Records. With much superior music in that US catalogue, it brought further smiles to the faces of Joop Visser and his staff. And this year has

seen an impressive slew of first-time Bethlehem releases on Affinity – this label bringing forth a still different, though more varied, sleeve design – including Mel Tormé's *Lulu's Back In Town* (AFF 85), Stan Levey's *Stanley the Steamer* (AFF 93), Zoot Sims' *Down Home* (AFF 87), Duke Ellington's *The Jeep Is Jumpin'* (AFF 91), and Charlie Mingus' *East Coasting* (AFF 86). More goodies from the same source are currently just available, including *The Mighty (Ruby) Bruff* (AFF 98), Charlie Mariano's *Alto Sax For Young Mothers* (AFF 99) – and released as a two-LP set for the first time anywhere in the world, a collection whose latest title tells it all – *Mel Tormé; Live At the Crescendo* (AFF/D)100).



The one sad story of Affinity's releases thus far has been the comprehensive disinterest shown by local buyers to *Commit No Nuisance* (AFF 44) – a consistently superb album of quartet-size jazz, showcasing the group co-led by Don Weller and Bryan Spring. It was Affinity's first-ever British recording, made specifically for the label.



'It's the worst seller. We worked on it. We promoted it. And the band itself worked. I'm in the red with the project – but it's a real shame. The problem is that the British jazz fan is definitely not a supporter of his own local jazz talents. But that was – *is* – a great record by Don and Bryan ...'

But to show that he's not finished completely with British jazz – yet still risking charges of lunacy or advanced senility – Joop Visser released this past September an interesting LP by John Stevens' Spontaneous Music Ensemble – *1.2. Albert Ayler* (AFF 81) – recorded in live

performance, in Oslo, in 1971. Hopefully, too, Visser will be releasing a perhaps even more remarkable Stevens live date – taped at Bracknell this year – either at the end of 1982 or early next year. It features also Peter King ('One of the world's finest alto-saxophonists. Somewhere along the line I'd like to talk to him about recording for the label', says Visser), and everyone at Ilderton Road is excited about its appearance.

Elsewhere, there has been little non-US jazz from Charly Records. Saxophonist Zbigniew Namysłowski's *Air Condition* (AFF 83) is the company's only moderate concession to cross-over jazz thus far. During the Polish saxist's latest UK tour, Visser hopes to release a 12-inch single. 'Young kids are waking up to the good sounds. People have been dancing to one or two tracks from *Air Condition*. I'm certainly no jazz-rock freak, but when it's done as good as Zbigniew does it, it's only inverted snobbery by the jazz people which would make them knock it ...'

Joop Visser's genuine love and affection for jazz goes back to when he was 14. His first jazz sounds were on record – Nelson Williams with the Dutch Swing College Band, Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman. The 'nice-guy' of this year's Capital Radio Jazz Festival was, in fact, Joop's first hero ... he even started to learn clarinet at one stage. 'Then I heard "Congo Blues". And that hit me like – *boom!* Bird's solo, of course. It was the *nerve* of it – it was the whole trip. I was sold, thereafter, on modern jazz'.

Visser's vast experience in the record industry began in 1960 – six months spent before army service in a retail establishment. After which, he joined EMI-Holland, working in a variety of areas. His first experience in handling jazz product came when he started handling labels of his own. He then came to Britain to work for EMI at Manchester Square, as head of A&R. His association with the British major lasted ten years.

What of Affinity's future development as one of Britain's premier jazz labels? More from Capitol – much more from Vee-Jay ('including a rare Toshiko Mariano Big Band date') and Bethlehem. And through the great tenorist's widow, Visser is negotiating for 'about two hours of live prime Don Byas'.

And Visser is excited about a deal he's done with former New York ABC-radio deejay Alan Grant who, during the Sixties and with the musicians' permission, taped much live jazz in clubs in the Big Apple. A smattering of

the 'absolutely first-class' material has seen the light of day in bootleg form. But the rest is all hitherto unreleased – and Charly/Affinity have world release rights. Among the list of artists are Sonny Rollins, Cannonball Adderley, Jimmy Rushing (with Al, Zoot), Eric Dolphy with Joe Carroll, Kenny Dorham/Joe Farrell, Dorham with Joe Henderson, Art Farmer/Jimmy Heath Quintet, Roy Eldridge/Richie Kamuca, Walter Bishop with T-Bone Walker (would you believe!) and what will be the earliest recordings of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra ('when they had a book of only about nine tunes').

First issues of this mouth-watering material take place in 1983 –



ten albums to begin with. 'I've got 40 albums of music. And Alan Grant, who organises the jazz life in Las Vegas since Monk Montgomery's death, has agreed to make available to me additional live stuff, recorded in Vegas much more recently.'

It's too risky to make predictions as to how much more jazz, and from which source – new as well as old – will be ensuring that

the name of Affinity will be constantly in focus for the foreseeable future. Certainly, though it will be much in evidence during the Eighties.

Already, Joop Visser has released first-rate product from some of the music's greatest – Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Ben Webster, Eric Dolphy, Art Ensemble of Chicago, Cecil Taylor, Bill Evans, Lester Young, Frank Rosolino, Gene Ammons ... the list is growing month by month.

Only one jazz great is currently missing from the material on release, that of Joop's No 1 man: Charlie Parker. Fear not. It will be no surprise at all to find that, in a year's time or less, that omission has been rectified by the in-



defatigable Dutchman.

Isn't it nice to know you've got a guy in the greedy ol' record world who digs the music he releases, takes loving care to ensure that it sounds great and is packaged in a style that is commensurate to its artistic content – someone, in short, who really takes care of business?

But, then, that's really what affinity is all about ...

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'Challenge was quite representative of what we were doing – using pieces as springboards for improvisation,' explains Stevens.

'However, on the last track – "End To A Beginning" – my intention was to break up the line as it went on; concentrate itself more and more, and break it into smaller and smaller pieces, so we ended up playing in a very detailed fashion, in the same way that a pointillist painter would choose to use dots.

'I was working towards a non-linear way of playing. I was trying to attract the group towards that by relating to the moment in order to hear all the instruments within the musical environment, rather than develop the improvisation in a linear way – meaning that the individual didn't develop individual lines.

'Between the first and second album (*Karyobin*), there was an important development that has not been documented which was to do with moving away from melody towards abstract interactions – becoming more aligned to the influence of Webern. That period incorporated various sorts of textures and colours that were outside of our normal instruments. During that time, Trevor (Watts) played oboe and piccolo, as well as alto. Glockenspiel, marimba and various other percussion would be used, not just by me but by the members of the group (trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, reeds-player Evan Parker, guitarist Derek Bailey, trombonist Paul Rutherford, bassist Barry Guy).'

During this period (1967), Stevens had access to the facilities at Olympic Studios where the group experimented with different ideas.


'One of the ideas I had was for Derek and me to lay down a performance – not in a normal interacting way but to put down on tape, say, half an hour of a sparse, formal orchestral approach to improvisation. My idea was to do this sound by sound, one after another, and sometimes the chance thing would occur where we both connected at the same time but unintentionally. Then the other musicians would come in, have the track played through headphones and then interact with it.'

Stevens didn't follow this idea through because he realised he was getting sidetracked from the natural, organic approach towards improvisation.

'That's about as far as I went with that particular sort of objective or semi-objective approach. But I felt it was becoming slightly outside the realm of the interacting human involvement which the possibility of improvisation allows for. I actually started

The Spontaneous Music Ensemble's first album, *Challenge*, was released in 1966. The album provided the first recorded evidence of Britain's developing free-jazz movement – developments which centred on London's Little Theatre Club in which drummer JOHN STEVENS sought to extend his ideas through SME.

Andrew Turner takes up the John Stevens' story from this point



JOHN STEVENS

.. Spontaneous Music part 2

reacting against something I'd been involved in, so – in the end – Evan and I broke away and worked as a duo.'

Out of this collaboration in 1968 came *Karyobin* which involved other musicians who had been augmenting the duo (guitarist Derek Bailey, trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, bassist Dave Holland). Also around that time, Trevor Watts separately formed Amalgam.

As John explains: 'Amalgam was really interesting and completely different from what Evan and I were doing, and was very much a linear concept. It had beautiful textures and lines.'

The dissolving of Stevens' duo with Evan Parker led to further developments within SME, resulting in the composition *Famille*.

'There was a composition of mine called "Distant Little

Soul". The combination of that piece and "Little Red-head", which is on *Challenge*, were the basic lines that we used for *Famille*. The development of *Famille* as a composition was using the method of deep breathing; playing the notes, exhaling through the instrument as slowly as possible. This method related to all the instruments, not just the horn-players.

'I started moving into the area

of disciplines that were outside the norm – physical disciplines that would make the actual playing take on a very natural element, not to do with the usual sort of virtuoso type of articulation.

'*Famille* was to do with having a series of notes which everybody was going to play but using their own breath lengths to do it with, so everybody wasn't moving from the first to the second note at the same time. The pitches would trail off so, in the overlap, you'd have these natural harmonies, microrotones, which you hear in Japanese music, but making the music subconscious rather than self-conscious. The result was very exciting.'

The voice figured prominently in *Famille*. In the original piece performed in Baden-Baden, the voice was Jeanne Lee; in subsequent versions, Maggie Nicols, Norma Winstone and Pepi Lemer. In Stevens' early-Seventies' workshops, the voice took on a special importance.

'The voice is such a natural instrument and I was trying to work towards a very natural approach that was almost beyond music. It was combining with other people to do something – you could say a ritual or meditative approach.'

Singer Julie Tippetts' involvement in SME in 1971 marked a milestone in the group's development. A perfect synthesis of voice (Tippetts and Stevens), strings (Tippetts' guitar and Ron Herman's bass), horns (Stevens' cornet and Trevor Watts' soprano sax) and Stevens' percussion.

'What was challenging was that Julie's rhythmic concept was different from ours because we'd developed out of a purely jazz tradition and she'd worked in the rock area for a long time. So, in many ways, her beat was wider.'

'Another development was a thing with that quartet plus the voices of Maggie Nicols, Norma Winstone, Carol Ann Nicols and Pepi Lemer. After Julie left, the group changed and became more jazzy, with bassist Ron Mathewson, pianist Mike Pyne, Pepi and Trevor, where I would compose pieces to suit the people within it, and then down to a duo with Trevor performing "face-to-face" and – within that – always the

completely free improvisations that we'd always been doing.'

During 1971-1973, SME went through constant changes, swinging from a jazzy feel (*The Source*) to sparse collective improvisation (*Face To Face*).

As John explains: 'It was to do with the people I was involved with and just finding out the possibilities of painting or composing within music, of not losing too much freedom, always with an eye on collective improvisation which, in the end, I felt was the most important statement. Which leads up to what I feel now is probably the purest example of SME – the current one with Nigel Coomes, Roger Smith and I – because it is the *Spontaneous Music Ensemble*... that is, I never compose anything for it. We might just talk about how a performance went, or how the music is developing, but that's all.'

'That unit has been going for about five years. It's very interesting and challenging because it's using Spanish guitar without a pick-up (Roger Smith) which is not the most powerful of instruments, and violin (Nigel Coomes), plus my percussion and cornet so the textures can be very complex and intimate. This group is definitely an ongoing challenge. Sometimes we're a bit disappointed because we don't get many gigs. This means that we don't get enough opportunity to perform the music in public, but we're continuing to develop the music anyway.'

Stevens' involvement with the Little Theatre Club continued until the mid-Seventies, followed by a long residency at the Plough pub in Stockwell, London. His activities in this period showed the greatest divergence from SME which evolved from collaborations with key figures.

One of these was singer John Martyn with whom Stevens worked alongside bassist Danny Thompson. John Martyn was not only an influence on Stevens but is also one of his favourite musicians. His experience with Martyn led to collaborating with guitarist Steve Hayton. With Hayton, bassist Pete Cowling and Trevor Watts, Stevens founded the first Away group, and that

area of music presented yet another challenge.

'Rather than sitting in a room listening to Curtis Mayfield, James Brown, or even Zappa and Stevie Wonder, I was actually playing with people who not only had been listening to those people, but were also playing that kind of music, and there we were improvising together. I'll never be a funk drummer but I can touch on the experience of people who play that sort of music.'

Was Stevens aware of the fuss created in some circles over his formation of a so-called 'jazz rock' band?

'I was made aware of it. Before *Away*, there was a picture of me in *Time Out* playing a conventional drum-kit after having spent a whole period without one in SME. The caption said, "What's going on? This avant-gardist has gone back to playing a conventional kit...". It doesn't really matter what you do, I don't want to be dishonest about what I like. I would love to have worked with Judy Garland, for instance, because the way she approached things appeals to me.'

'Working with a singer like Donovan, for example, was a challenge because there were set tunes; within those he was saying, "This is the tune, let's see what we can get out of it" – which is really nice. So with *Away*, people can think what they like, but it was connecting with a whole different team of musicians.'

More recently John Stevens has collaborated with altoist Pete King and guitarist John Etheridge in a free-bop set-up.

During the Actual 82 festival in London earlier this year, he brought together several British and South African musicians with whom he has collaborated in recent years, such as trombonist Paul Rutherford, trumpeter Jon Corbett, altoist Dudu Pukwana, drummer Louis Moholo and bassist Johnny Dyani for a three-day project. Also involved was the tap-dancer Will Gaines.

'My collaboration with Will is very important to me and has opened up contact with dance through workshops, meeting dancers etc. And then there's the theatre which I'm really in-

terested in and the possibility of working with people who would normally be involved in theatre – using the same sort of approaches as workshops, developing from motif material towards performance material.'

So, finally, after 17 years of continual involvement and development within the area of improvisation, how does John Stevens view the music now?

'What I see as the importance of free group improvisation is that it exists and continues to exist, and that the people connected with it continue with it. It's still quite a rarity. There isn't a great deal of improvisation within theatre and dance. Its importance is not necessarily as a music but as a statement – an activity. It's something which I believe could be appreciated by virtually anybody who's open enough. You never run out of possibilities of interactions with other people. If you do, you're almost running out of life because that's an essence of life.'

'We are dealing with freedom but freedom within the context of communication with other people within that freedom. You've got to have natural discipline, not just bursting out and expressing yourself at the expense of somebody else because that's what you might feel like doing. But you find out that the real beauty is always to allow the vision of the other person to be there – still have the chance to say what you want but, at the same time, hear what the other person says.'

It's an ongoing thing. We're trying to learn about those things – trying to learn how to live together.'

Selected SME Recordings

Challenge (Eyemark) – deleted.
Karyobin (Island) – deleted.
Famille – unissued.
Olivo (Marmalade) – deleted.
The Source (Tangent).
Face To Face (Emanem) – deleted.
So What Do You Think? (Tangent).
Birds of a Feather (BYG) – deleted.
1.2. Albert Ayler (Affinity).
Biosystems (Incus).



John with Evan Parker, May '67.



Paul Rutherford, Derek Bailey, Chris Cambridge, John Stevens, Trevor Watts, Evan Parker, March '67.



S.M.E. with Trevor Watts, 1968

SOUND CHECK

Record Reviews

ARCHIE SHEPP: *Poem For Malcolm* (AFF 78)

Recorded: Paris - 14th August, 1969.

Side One: 'Mamamose'/'Poem For Malcolm'. *Side Two:* 'Rain Forest'/'Oleo'.

Archie Shepp (ss/ts/p/vce)/Burton Greene (p)/Alan Silva (b)/Claude Delcloo (d)/Philly Joe Jones (dt)/Hank Mobley (ts)/Grachan Moncur III (tmb)/Vince Benedetti (p)/Malachi Favors (bs).

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO: *Message To Our Folks* (AFF 77)

Recorded: Paris - 12th August, 1969.

Side One: 'Old Time Religion'/'Dexterity'/'Rock Out'. *Side Two:* 'A Brain For The Seine'.

Lester Bowie (tp/fg/bs d horns)/Roscoe Mitchell (various reeds)/Joseph Jarman (various woodwinds-reeds gtr perc)/Malachi Favors (ac bs cl bs perc banjo).

CECIL TAYLOR: *Student Studies* (AFFD 74)

Recorded: Paris - 30th November, 1966.

Side One: 'Student Studies Pt 1'. *Side Two:* 'Student Studies Pt 2'. *Side Three:* 'Amplitude'. *Side Four:* 'Niggle Feuille'.

Cecil Taylor (p)/Jimmy Lyons (as)/Alan Silva (b)/Andrew Cyrille (d).

Since the label's inception in 1977, Affinity has adhered to a policy of reissues and previously unheard vintage recordings; one which continues at the expense of tapping the wealth of undocumented contemporary jazz talent. If that policy prompts criticism, then Affinity's face-saver has proved to be the judicious nature of their releases. Amongst them figure the outpourings of the shambolic, but none-the-less important BYG label who were responsible for documenting the major developments taking place in jazz during the late Sixties.

Of this latest batch, two albums date from 1969, a year which saw Paris teeming with expatriate Black Americans - musicians who had crossed the seas in search of more sympathetic working environments. It was a

time of forging relationships, re-defining the scope of jazz and reasserting the music as a vocabulary of black pride and resistance. Suffice to say that BYG kept the Parisian studios busy, ferrying these musicians to and from sessions, knocking out albums like they were going out of fashion.

The results of this frenzied activity were decidedly mixed; aimless freakouts (of little interest then and even less now) figuring alongside breathtakingly coherent statements of intent in almost equal proportions.

Archie Shepp's *Poem For Malcolm* is one of the latter and a classic to boot. Shepp's music is one in which nerve-ends are exposed; free music that acknowledges jazz heritage whilst pushing out towards new extremes. He boasts a muscular and distinctive saxophone style; one which veers between warmth, lyricism and hair-raising squalling. Listen to his dexterous soprano lines rising phoenix-like from a rhythmic bed fuelled by Philly Joe Jones and Claude Delcloo's fiery drumming and Burton Greene's uncharacteristically sensitive work under the piano lid. *Side Two's* 'Rain Forest' is an undisputed cornerstone in Shepp's career - an exercise in prompting exhilarating responses from musicians, some of whom are rarely associated with free jazz. In this case drummer Philly Joe Jones (former sideman to Sonny Rollins and Miles Davis, undergoes initiation in both dialogue (with Shepp) and the later triologue (with Shepp and trombonist Grachan Moncur III). Jones, in turn, provides the connection for an all-too-short reading of Rollins' 'Oleo' which brings this cutting album to a close.

The Art Ensemble Of Chicago were similarly prolific in the recording studio, both as individuals sitting in on sessions with the likes of Shepp, Sunny Murray et al, and as a collective. Their claim to the banner 'Great Black Music' is a sincere one. Such heritage permeates the first side of *Message To Our Folks* with its stabs at gospel and spiritual fervour ('Old

Time Religion') and bebop ('Dexterity'). Indeed, their accuracy and humour only comes unstuck on 'Rock Out', a tongue-in-cheek exploration of contemporary Western music which succeeds only in falling flat on its face.

What distinguished the band from its fellow Parisian visitors was the musicians' strong link with the avant-garde; an influence that was just as vital a part of the band's exploration of small sounds and percussives as was the absence of a drummer (Don Moye was yet to join the group). 'A Brain For The Seine' documents this side of their work and is exemplary in proving that free improvisation does not equate only with cacophony. Here the results demonstrate the band's ideas of texture and pacing - a wholly successful and important record of their development as a quartet.

Although released on BYG, Cecil Taylor's *Student Studies* predates the fervent activity of 1969. Stretching beyond jazz into the realms of the classical avant-garde, Taylor's music had long outstripped the experimental category - the likes of which adorned the AECC. Indeed, ambiguities and hidden subtleties have no place in his work. Starting from tortuous, jagged themes, the music develops into a rippling sea of sound; Taylor's virtuoso piano work controlling the energy level into which the musicians interlock. Dark note-clusters abound with Taylor's piano dovetailed with Cyrille's percussion whilst Jimmy Lyons' alto is consistently sharp, stimulating and disciplined - a far cry from much of his work away from Taylor's glare. Silva's bass playing is, as always, economic and effective, pushing and probing from underneath the rhythmic foundations. The results make for tough listening, but if there is any place for the uninitiated to start, then *Student Studies* is definitely one of them; this quartet performance bearing a clarity that leaves no doubt as to the musicians' commitment to a redefinition of jazz and black music.

David Ilie

CHET BAKER: *Peace* (ENJA 4016)

Recorded: Vanguard Studios, New York - 23rd February, 1982.

Side One: 'Syzgies'/'Peace'/'Lament for Thelonious'. *Side Two:* 'The Song is You'/'Shadows'/'For Now'.

Chet Baker (tp)/David Friedman (marimba/vibes)/Buster Williams (bs)/Joe Chambers (d).

FREDDIE HUBBARD: *Outpost* (ENJA 3095)

Recorded: Sound Ideas, New York - 16th & 17th March, 1981.

Side One: 'Santa Anna Winds'/'You Don't Know What Love Is'/'The Outpost Blues'. *Side Two:* 'Dual Force'/'Loss'.

Freddie Hubbard (tp)/Kenny Barron (p)/Buster Williams (b)/Al Foster (d).

BENNIE WALLACE: *The Bennie Wallace Trio and Chick Corea* (ENJA 4028)

Recorded: Vanguard Studios, New York - 4th & 5th May, 1982.

Side One: 'The Bob Crosby Blues'/'Mystic Bridge'. *Side Two:* 'My One and Only Love'/'Foxtro'/'Llowed'.

Bennie Wallace (ts)/Chick Corea (p)/Eddie Gomez (b)/Dannie Richmond (d).

JOHN SCOFIELD: *Shinola* (ENJA 4004)

Recorded: Munich, 12th December, 1981.

Side One: 'Why D'you Do It'/'Yawn'/'Dr Jackle'. *Side Two:* 'Jean the Bean'/'Rags to Riches'/'Shinola'.

John Scofield (g)/Steve Swallow (b)/Adam Nussbaum (d).

WOODY SHAW: *Lotus Flower* (ENJA 4018)

Recorded: Vanguard Studios, New York - 7th January, 1982.

Side One: 'Eastern Joy Dance'/'Game'/'Lotus Flower'. *Side Two:* 'Rahsaan's Run'/'Song of Songs'.

Woody Shaw (tp)/Steve Turre (trb)/Mulgrew Miller (p)/Stafford James (b)/Tony Reedus (d).

The pervasive influence of the ECM record company has spread to the Munich-based ENJA label, which now goes in for tasteful cover artwork full of blue horizons and fallen leaves, unusual combinations of celebrated performers, and high-class production. It is to the European labels that enthusiasts now look for just that honest, no-frills, small-band music that has long been such an indelible pleasure of jazz.

A current batch of ENJA releases performs that service pretty convincingly. The best of the bunch is probably a session led by Chet Baker and vibes-and-



Cecil Taylor

marimba player David Friedman – entitled *Peace* and featuring Buster Williams and Joe Chambers on bass and drums. It's a delicate, subtle, intelligent piece of work, but without the soporific quality that sometimes accompanies Baker's exploits – an effect often down to sidemen allowing themselves to be lulled into a trance by the trumpeter's fragile, ethereal style.

Williams and Chambers don't get caught out like this, and maintain a quiet firmness throughout. Williams perfectly demonstrates what Red Norvo calls 'the point on the note', the precise articulation of his playing makes each note pop like a cork, and the endlessly prolonged slur he drapes over the bridge of Kern's 'The Song is You' gives Baker's reluctant arrival an irresistible tension. Chambers is loose and affable, maintaining an endless tapestry of offhanded accents and clattering remonstrances; Friedman – who studiously avoids sugary effects and works with a palette of hollow, clapping sounds and wooden, vibrato-less noises – perfectly offsets Baker's lazy romanticism.

Freddie Hubbard is, of course, the other side of the universe to all this. Spectacular technical effects continually taunt him and, if he loses concentration for a second, they run all over him. Unlike Baker's record – which is strong on good tunes, lateral thinking and confidence about open space – Hubbard's is, predictably, too dense and muscle-bound. He delivers some classic early Milesian half-notes and purrs on the slow 'You Don't Know What Love Is' but on bland pieces like 'Santa Anna Winds' and 'Outpost Blues', the kind of slick riffing you associate with the old soul-jazz style gives the music a distinct aura of *déjà vu*.

Rather more unusual is a session between tenorist Bennie Wallace and Chick Corea, with Eddie Gomez on bass and Dannie Richmond on drums. Wallace is a broad-toned, punchy-sounding saxophonist who has a swing-

player's attractive inclination to resemble somebody painting a canvas with a distemper brush, but who threads between the optimistic sweeps a convoluted, edgy sense of melodic design that isn't far away from Eric Dolphy's. Hearing Corea play in a context like this is an unexpected delight. He concentrates a good deal on the rhythmic use of chords in his solos, letting the bass and drums hold together the more disparate of his thoughts. They play five tunes, three of them quirky Wallace compositions which combine spiralling, wide-interval runs and abrupt time changes. It's an attractive mixture, a bit like a straighter version of the treatment Braxton occasionally gives to bop.

John Abercrombie and Jon Scofield are both musicians' guitarists who are unlikely ever to have vast crowds falling at their feet but who have coaxed a good many more musicianly effects out of a rock guitarist's armoury than is common these days. Scofield appears with Steve Swallow (bass) and Adam Nussbaum (drums) on *Shinola*. Opening with the sensuous, bluesy 'Why D'you Do It', it takes in fast bops like Jackie McLean's 'Dr Jackie', and, throughout, there is Scofield's characteristic blend of chiming, country-like chord voicings punctuating tumbling bebop lines. A distinctive and highly musical set (a quality you can invariably expect from Swallow's bass-playing in any event) – bits of the title track virtually resemble an old Jimi Hendrix session.

Woody Shaw's record is an example of that plush, well-oiled, small-band jazz that seems to create deft, elegant effects with the minimum of sweat. It's glossy, rather urbane music, dominated by Shaw's bright, surefooted technique – which on the crackling 'Rahsaan's Run' resembles an early uptempo Miles Davis solo without the hesitations. Steve Turre's trombone and Mulgrew Miller's piano are in close attendance.

John Fordham



Fred Hopkins of Air

ANTHONY BRAXTON: *Six Compositions: Quartet* (Antilles AN 1005)

Recorded: New York – 21st & 22nd October, 1981.

Side One: '40 B'/'69 N'/'34'. Side Two: '40 A'/'40 G'/'52'.

Anthony Braxton (as/bs/cbcl)/Anthony Davis (p)/Mark Helias (b)/Ed Blackwell (d)

AIR: *80° Below* '82 (Antilles AN 1007)

Recorded: 23rd & 24th January, 1982.

Side One: 'Chicago Breakdown'/'The Traveller'. Side Two: '80° Below'/'82'/'Do Tell'.

Henry Threadgill (as)/Fred Hopkins (b)/Steve McCall (d).

ORNETTE COLEMAN: *Of Human Feelings* (Antilles AN 2001)

Recorded: New York – April 1979.

Side One: 'Sleep Talk'/'Jump Street'/'Him And Her'/'Air Ship'. Side Two: 'What Is The Name Of That Song'/'Job Mob'/'Love Words'/'Times Square'.

Ornette Coleman (as)/Ornette Denardo Coleman (d)/Charlie Elberlee (g)/Bern Nix (g)/Jamaaladeen Tacuma (elb)/Calvin Weston (d).

Another welcome newcomer to the roster of companies serving jazz is the Antilles label. Its earliest issues proclaim a willingness to document the music of 'today', but not to get into a stylistic rut.

Ornette Coleman is no longer the proselytising power he once was, and his *Of Human Feelings* (AN 2001) takes us along his new harmolodic path, without con-

vincing us that the journey is totally worth while. Coleman plays with his customary skill and invention, but the insistent bass line becomes a bore rather than a stabilising element, and the loose-limbed interplay of the two drummers fails to direct the music quite as positively as should be the case.

By contrast, the Air album (AN 1007) shows total stylistic commitment. Altoist Henry Threadgill thrives in such an atmosphere and, with the bassist Fred Hopkins justifying the status of contrapuntal rival, there are plenty of melodic challenges to be faced by both men. On this occasion, the scene is almost stolen by Steve McCall, who drums with restless urgency and puts the backbone into the trio. Jelly Roll Morton's 'Chicago Breakdown' is rapped more gently than is often the case in Air's programme of 'classic', but, throughout the album, the group achieves a fine balance between counterpoint and individual solos.

Perhaps the most impressive issue to date is the Anthony Braxton *Six Compositions: Quartet*. The title is self explanatory and pianist Anthony Davis, bassist Mark Helias and drummer Ed Blackwell help the Chicagoan to express himself on some highly varied material, in a totally successful manner. There are different areas of emphasis for the rhythm players, but the leader solos with tremendous creativity as well as with complete technical control. In a solo setting, he is impressive, but this record confirms that Braxton is at his best with the challenge of his peers.

Barry McRae

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Sonny Rollins

LAMBERT, HENDRICKS & ROSS: *Sing A Song of Bane* (Jasmine JAS 6)

Recorded: 26th August, 16th, 27th September, 11th October, 26th November, 1957.

Side One: 'Everyday'/'It's Sand, Man!'/ 'Two For The Blues'/'One O'clock Jump'/'Little Pony'. Side Two: 'Down For Double'/'Fiesta In Blue'/'Down For The Count'/'Blues Backstage'/'Avenue C'.

Dave Lambert, Jon Hendricks, Annie Ross (vcs)/Nat Pierce (p)/Freddie Greene (g)/Eddie Jones (b)/Sonny Payne (d).

JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET: *Coltrane* (Jasmine JAS 10)

Recorded: NYC, 21st December, 1961.

Side One: 'Out Of This World'/'Soul Eyes'. Side Two: 'The Inch Worm'/'Tunji'/'Miles Mode'.

John Coltrane (ts/ss)/McCoy Tyner (p)/Jimmy Garrison (b)/Elvin Jones (d).

SONNY ROLLINS: *On Impulse!* (Jasmine JAS 2)

Recorded: NYC, 8th July, 1965.

Side One: 'On Green Dolphin Street'/'Everything Happens To Me'. Side Two: 'Hold 'Em Joe'/'Blue Room'/'Three Little Words'.

Sonny Rollins (ts)/Ray Bryant (p)/Walter Booker (b)/Mickey Roker (d).

For no good reason, I was never exhilarated by Lambert, Hendricks & Ross as I usually am by good vocalese performers singly. This album – the one that made the trio's name – features painstaking vocal re-creations of Basic's horns. It involved multi-taping and some 60 hours of studio time, and it has never been equalled in its field.

All the lyrics, written by Jon Hendricks, are hiply larded with Fifties' slang and gable by in fashionable fashion. Not memorable in themselves, they neverthe-

less respond slickly to vocal acceleration, skid, miss-one-and-hit. Annie Ross is the most immediately ear-catching, pitching true and wickedly high; Lambert, nimble as the crossword ibex; Jon Hendricks, a creamy, light and mobile Eckstine. There isn't much personality in the voices – which has also been said of late Basic bands – but plenty of piston precision. King Pleasure and certainly Eddie Jefferson were less adroit, but memorable at times: Leo Watson was nuts and unforgettable.

'Little Pony' – perhaps because it comes on like the breathless Mr Beeks – has always been my favourite track: Annie riffling, Dave roving and droning in back, and Jon in fully giddy-up, acting like the greatest cat around. This has an acted-out quality, a joke bunniness that hews closer to the spirit than the chromium fidelities. Annie Ross's lovely voice comes into its own as Buck Clayton on 'Fiesta In Blue', and the outro to 'Blues Backstage'. Her Basic breaks on 'Avenue C' are as clever as it comes, deliberate through a flak thicket of Hendricks and Lambert.

It's a reassurance that will activate a lot of nostalgia buds; it's brilliant, but not my bag.

As for the Coltrane – after 20 years, I still find this my favourite, and 'Out Of This World' my favourite track. It is not as important as *Giant Steps* or *A Love Supreme* but, if you are just trying to have a life, you may well find yourself returning to the less-important for deep satisfaction rather than challenging exorcism. A good GP can steer you on this.

'Out Of This World' is a perfectly balanced improvisation, not a possession. Coltrane rides in on the loping drive of Elvin, his tone suggesting that he will drive for the marrow, but grounding at all times in resolution. He spears out the infinitely sad progression, aching with the weight that Elvin lays on the scales. We know that Trane will tear open the syntax of what he has said, question the tongue itself, but although he begins to bear down towards the end of the opening solo, he concedes a considerable reprise of the melody before handing over to McCoy, and allows a restatement of the mood in the second solo before curdling notes and retching deep into the guts of music for some visceral truth.

This sounds like a case for good taste and moderation in the arts: far from it. Symmetry, no matter how high the passions, must hold the road, or else what is communicated is one-dimensional – a fury, a pain, a frustration. Coltrane is good for your life, but read the label. You can probably get your essential Coltrane collec-

tion down to around 20 albums on this dictum. Get this one at once, because it holds hope and despair in either hand – then buy *Ascension* and *Live In Seattle* and see which you play the most.

Rollins *On Impulse!* is not great Rollins, but great questions. Most of the best of Coltrane was on *Impulse!*, hardly any of Rollins – possibly connected facts. In terms of the imaginatively constructed solo, Rollins has no tenor peer, but given the state of public apathy, commercial rapaciousness and just plain so-what, his spirit has sometimes deserted him.

'On Green Dolphin Street' sounds as if he chooses to be a colour on an arranger's palette. He noodles in and out of the haunting melody, never quite indolent, subordinating his commanding presence to the mood. This is very banked-down Sonny and, in a strange way, it works. What he is up against here is audience expectation: Sonny is the soloist supreme, and if he wants this sort of group equality why doesn't he assemble giants, rather than scale down for the good second-rank? Still, it goes on troubling the listener, and Walter Booker's strained upper register is perennially arresting.

Rollins is so astute that he sees through the whole game. Hear the way he insinuates 'Someone To Watch Over Me' into 'Everything Happens To Me', as if to say any tender caressing shit will do at this point – and it does do, but where is his heart? Odd, sidling tenor here, peaking on the almost camp held note before the hand-over, and a cute curtsy break.

'Hold 'Em Joe' is the familiar calypso, a ready-made relief to the improviser troubled by spontaneously grand designs. In later years, Sonny begged the question profitably with this stuff, but – judging by last year's unbeatable performance – never quite reconciled his genius to party-time. 'Blue Room' – a genteel standard for stole and white dicky-bow – is superbly altered without damaging the mood. The tenorman finds a stutter in the theme delivery, and works that row to dashing effect, banking in back throughout Bryant's pleasant solo, and blurring back into focus at will. This is probably the nearest Sonny got to Zoot and Getz and the revered standard.

'Three Little Words' is a masterpiece, comparable with 'Four' on the *Noel's The Time* album from RCA. This is commitment, the chops right, the game worth the playing. Cop the fours with Roker at the end, feel the drive of genius, and understand why the faithful stick with Sonny through the years of dross. Brian Case



Chico Freeman

BUD POWELL: *Inner Fires* (Elektra Musician MUS K 52 363)

Recorded: Club Kavakas, Washington, DC - 5th April, 1953.

Side One: 'I Want To Be Happy'/'Somebody Loves Me'/'Nice Work If You Can Get It'/'Salt Pennants'/'Conception'/'Lullabye of Birdland'. *Side Two:* 'Little Willie Leaps'/'Hallelujah'/'Lullabye of Birdland' (alternate master)/'Sure Thing'/'Woody N' You'/'Bud Powell interview - 15th January and 6th May, 1963. Bud Powell (p)/Charlie Mingus (b)/Roy Haynes (d).

CLIFFORD BROWN MAX ROACH: *Pure Genius Vol One* (Elektra Musician MUS K 52 388)

Recorded: Privately - 1956.

Side One: 'I'll Remember April'/'What's New' (this is label only but reversed on record). *Side Two:* 'Daahoud'/'Lower Man'/'52nd Street Theme'.

Clifford Brown (t)/Sonny Rollins (t)/Richie Powell (p)/George Morrow (b)/Max Roach (d).

DEXTER GORDON: *American Classic* (Elektra Musician MUS K 52 392)

Recorded: Sigma Sound, Philadelphia - 8th March, 1982; Vanguard Studios, NYC - 16th March, 1982.

Side One: 'Jumpin' Blues'/'Besame Mucho'/'For Soul Sister'. *Side Two:* 'Sticky Wicket'/'Skylark'/'Dexter Gordon interview.

Dexter Gordon (ts)/Grover Washington Jr (ss)/Shirley Scott (org)/Kirk Lightsey (p)/David Eubanks (bass)/Eddie Gladden (d).

SPHERE: *Four In One* (Elektra Musician MUS K 52 415)

Recorded: Rudy Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, NJ - 17th February, 1982.

Side One: 'Four In One'/'Light Blue'/'Monk's Dream'. *Side Two:* 'Evidence'/'Reflections'/'Eronel'.

Charlie Rouse (ts)/Kenny Barron (p)/Buster Williams (b)/Ben Riley (d).

CHICO FREEMAN: *Tradition in Transition* (Elektra Musician MUS K 52 412)

Recorded: Eurosound, NY (no date but probably 1982).

Side One: 'Jackie-ing'/'Free Association'/'Mys-story'/'Talkin' Trash'. *Side Two:* 'Each One Teach One'/'At A Glance'/'The Trespasser'/'In-spirit'/'A Prayer'.

Chico Freeman (ts/t/bclt)/Wallace Roney (t)/Clyde Criner (p)/Cecil McBee (b)/Jack de Johnette (d/p)/Billy Hart (d).

From these five records, there are two (Bud Powell and Clifford Brown/Max Roach) that are on the edge, stretching, searching, exciting and excited in a fashion which is under control without constriction - and both were recorded over 25 years before the other three.

In an age where we are used to terms like 'free music' and 'free jazz' etc, it's odd to find that the most boldly spontaneous-sounding music should, in this instance, come from a quarter-of-a-century ago. That is not to say that this is the case in general. The sort of spontaneous intensity I'm talking about still exists but is usually found outside the jazz or improvised music establishment. It's not so much a style of music but a way of playing - a stretching of the possibilities inherent in any form. The people who commit, and have committed, themselves to an infinite search within these possibilities of improvisation - individually and collectively, on and off the stand - rarely gain over-all acceptance in their own time; although, in retrospect, the appreciation for their achievements usually outweighs their more popular contemporaries. I seem to be stating a view that is ongoing and obvious but this thought-process was brought on by receiving and listening to these five records together. They are all of interest but the two I've separated have an added ingredient - an extra spark and, in the end, an extra challenge with the potential for deeper satisfaction.

In listening to Dexter Gordon,

we are faced with an influential original who always deserves attention as with - say - Billie Holiday, where whatever she sung (whenever or however) it was part of her life and therefore of importance because she was important. So, here we have another example of Gordon's work - this time from March 1982.

Thelonious Monk was a great artist - as a composer and player - and his contribution will be listened to and studied as long as music continues to exist. When his compositions are performed by a sensitive group of articulate musicians, adding their own personal interpretation, we can at least be sure of a pleasing experience. This is exactly the achievement of Sphere, plus at times touching on originality and inspiration, as with their interpretation of 'Monk's Dream'.

Monk also turns up on Bud Powell's *Inner Fires* where he's mentioned by Powell in the interview; on Brown and Roach's *Pure Genius* with a performance of his '52nd Street Theme'; and on Freeman's *Tradition in Transition* where the record opens with a relatively straight reading of Monk's 'Jackie-ing' which manages to contact some real freshness. The Freeman continues with eight original compositions from either the leader, McBee or Criner, spanning various views of contemporary jazz. For example; Freeman's 'Each One Teach One' is reminiscent of the Miles Davis Quintet of the middle-Sixties. All the music is well played but suffers from a slight self-consciousness which could have been brought about by the variety of approaches, causing the over-all concept to be at the expense of individual and group expressiveness.

It will be interesting to see how this new Elektra Musician label develops. Already they promise two more volumes of Max and Clifford plus some previously unreleased Bill Evans Trio material.

John Stevens

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JAKI BYARD: To Them-To Us
(Soul Note 1025)

Recorded: Milan - 27th May, 1981.

Side One: "To Them-To Us"/
"BL+WH=88"/"Tin Roof Blues"/
"Land of Make Believe". *Side Two:*
"Solitude"/"Caravan"/"Ode
To Billy Joe"/"Send One Your
Love"/"Excerpts From Trumpet
Concerto".

ART FARMER: Manhattan
(Soul Note 1026)

Recorded: Milan - 29th & 30th
November, 1981.

Side One: "Context"/"Blue Wall"/
"Manhattan". *Side Two:*
"Passport"/"Arrival"/"Back Door
Beauty".

Art Farmer (flh)/Sahib Shihab
ss/bb/Kenny Drew (p)/Mads
Vinding (b) Ed Thigpen (d).

**BILL DIXON: (Soul Note 1037
8)**

Recorded: (A & B) Milan - 16th
and 17th November, 1981; (C &
D) Zurich - 8th November, 1981.

Side One: "November 1981"/
"Penthesea". *Side Two:* "The
Second Sun"/"Another Quiet
Feeling". *Side Three:* "Announce-
ment"/"Webern"/"Windswept
Winter". *Side Four:* "Velvet"/
"Laattinnoo Suite"/"Announce-
ment".

Bill Dixon (t)/Alan Silva (b)/
Mario Pavone (b)/Laurence Cook
(d).

**BAIKIDA CARROLL: Shadows
and Reflections** (Soul Note SN
1023)

Recorded: New York - 13th and
20th January, 1982.

Side One: "Kaki"/"Jah Sundance
Lake"/"Left Jab". *Side Two:*
"Pyramids"/"At Roi".

Baikida Carroll (t/flh)/Julius
Hemphill (as/ts)/Anthony Davis
(p)/Dave Holland (b)/Pheroan
Ak Laff (d).

**HAMLET BLUIETT: Dangerously
Sure** (Soul Note SN 1018)

Recorded: New York - 9th April,
1981.

Side One: "Between The Rain-
drops"/"Ballad Of Eddie Jeff-
erson"/"Full, Deep And Mellow".
Side Two: "Prayer"/"Blues For At-
lanta, Georgia"/"Mighty Denn"/
"Doll Baby"/"Oasis"/"Rain Shout".
Hamlet Bluiett (bs cl)/Bob
Neloms (p)/Buster Williams (b),
Jabali Billy Hart (d)/Chief Bay
(pc)/Irene Datcher (v).

LEO SMITH: Go In Numbers
(Black Saint BSR 0053)

Recorded: New York 19/1 80

Side One: "The World Soul"/"Go
In Numbers". *Side Two:* "Illumi-
nation"/"The Nguzo Sabu"
"Changes".

Leo Smith (t/flh/f)/Dwight An-
drews (ts/ss)/Bobby Naughton
(vib)/Wes Brown (b/f).

**ROScoe MITCHELL: 3 x 4
EYE** (Black Saint BSR 0050)

Recorded: Milan - 18th & 19th
February, 1981.

Side One: "Cut Outs For Quintet"/
"Jo Jae". *Side Two:* "3 x 4 Eye"/
"Variations On A Folk Song Writ-
ten In The Sixties".

Hugh Ragin (t/flh/pic.t)/Roscoe
Mitchell (ss/as)/A. Spencer
Barefield (g)/Jaribu Shahid (b/
perc)/Tani Tabbal (perc).

**JOSEPH JARMAN/DON
MOYE: Earth Passage - Density**
(Black Saint BSR 0052)

Recorded: Milan - 16th & 17th
February, 1981.

Side One: "Zulu Village"/"Happi-
ness Is". *Side Two:* "Jawara"/"Sun
Spots".

Craig Harris (tb/f pc v) Joseph
Jarmar (ts pc as fcl bc) Rafael
Garrett (b/f cl ppc pc)
Famoudou Don Moyo (d pc).

**STRING TRIO OF NEW
YORK: Common Goal** (Black
Saint BSR 0058)

Recorded: Milan - 12th & 13th
November, 1981.

Side One: "Multiple Reasons"/
"Space Walk"/"San San Nana".
Side Two: "Between The Lines"/
"Common Goal"/"Extensions And
Exceptions".

Billy Bang (vn/tpc)/James
Emery (g)/John Lindberg (b).

**MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS:
Blues Forever** (Black Saint BSR
0061)

Recorded: Milan - 20th, 21st &
27th July, 1981.

Side One: "Ancient And Future
Reflections"/"Du King"/
"Chambers"/"Duet For One
World". *Side Two:* "Blues
Forever"/"Cluster For Many
Worlds"/"Quartet To Quartet".

Baikida Carroll (t/flh)/Craig Har-
ris (tb)/Wallace McMillan (bs/f)/
Jimmy Vass (as/f)/Eugene Ghee
(ts cl)/Vincent Chancy (frh)/
Howard Johnson (bb/bb)/Jean-
Paul Bourelly (g)/Muhai Richard
Abrams (p)/Michael (b)/Andrew
Cyrille (d).

There are several things that the
Black Saint and Soul Note labels
have in common. Both are devoted
to the contemporary end of the
stylistic spectrum but, more im-
portantly, both are produced by
Giovanni Bonandri. There is no
strict rule regarding the style fea-
tured on each label but recent is-
sues have suggested that Bonan-
dri keeps the slightly more ortho-
dox items in the Soul Note sta-
ble.

This could never be more true

than with the xameon-like tal-
ents of pianist Jaki Byard (SN
1025), whose cosmopolitan spirit
flows copiously on this impres-
sive solo album, even if he is
sometimes victim of his own ec-
lecticism. In contrast, Art
Farmer's recent issue (SN 1026)
shows him as very much his own
man. His creative flair transforms
each theme into a new, related
composition, while his tone and
execution make him unmistakable.
Pianist Kenny Drew picks
clean the bones of each tune and
Farmer enjoys further support
from Mads Vinding's propulsive
bass, Ed Thigpen's immaculate
drums and the no-nonsense reed
work of Sahib Shihab.

Two trumpeters who might be
expected to fish in similar waters
are Bill Dixon and Baikida Car-
roll. Yet their recent Soul Note is-
sues have suggested a considera-
ble stylistic gulf between them.
Dixon, working with only two
bassists and a drummer, is heard
on a double album (SN 1037/8)
that takes us through a studio
date and a complete concert,
without a moment's loss of in-
terest. His easy technical facility
and his inherent lyricism pro-
gress his solos in a way that
suggests effortless mastery. Yet
this skill tends to divert attention
from the chromatic audacity of a
style in which his intervallic leaps
continually challenge bassists
Alan Silva and Mario Pavone.

Baikida Carroll's *Shadows And
Reflections* (SN 1023) surpris-
ingly turns out to be straight New
York hard-bop. Because
saxophonist Julius Hemphill,
pianist Anthony Davis, bassist
Dave Holland, drummer Phero-
an Ak Laff and the leader are all
committed modernists, this
seems an unlikely stance to
adopt. In fact, they handle the pa-
rent idiom with rare panache,
muddying the flow of the
mainstream with odd references
to the vernacular of the new, but
treating each chord sequence
with respect.

For some, finding Hamlet
Bluiett similarly inclined might
be surprising. He is a member of
the forward looking World
Saxophone Quartet and has been
associated with many other free
players. Beneath the surface,
however, he has always been a
conservative, a tune player with a
better-than-passing knowledge of
the blues. *Dangerously Sure* (SN
1018) finds him balladeering in
the company of the meticulous
piano of Bob Neloms and laying
down the blues on clarinet with
the ease of an Albert Nicholas.

The current releases of Black
Saint are more progressive, al-
though they too cover a wide
emotional range. Leo Smith and
his New Delta Ahkri (BS 0053)
take up a laidback and introspec-

tive position, using space with
telling effect and, in many ways,
extending the spatial discoveries
of the Andrew Hill/Bobby
Hutcherson partnership. Dwight
Andrews' saxes, Bobby
Naughton's vibes and Wes
Brown's bass complete a drum-
less quartet that takes its time and
enriches each selection with
genuine content.

Perhaps more dauntingly emo-
tional is Roscoe Mitchell on 3 x 4
EYE (BSR 0050) where, in the
company of trumpeter Hugh
Ragin, he proves himself to be the
master of the *crie de coeur*. Space
again plays an important part in
the group concept but the revela-
tion is A. Spencer Barefield. This
guitarist manages to bridge the
gap between the ascetic, cold
steel brilliance of Derek Bailey
and the melodic grace of the post-
Kessel men, and he completes a
line-up that delivers uncom-
promisingly free jazz with no con-
cession made to the uninitiated.

Mitchell's reed-playing. Art
Ensemble colleague Joseph Jar-
man plays an important part in
the success of *Earth Passage* (BSR
0052) and this he co-leads with
drummer Don Moyo. He plays
some highly animated solos and is
matched in this by trombonist
Craig Harris. For all its bluster,
however, there is no doubt that a
great deal of preparation went
into this two-day session. It was
expended to good effect because
the arrangements lend order
without ever stifling the free flow
of the individual players.

A similar balance is achieved
by the String Trio of New York
who, on *Common Goal* (BSR
0058) demonstrate just how
much heart, rhythmic conviction
and creative impetus chamber
jazz can have. Leader Billy Bang
is a natural swinger who solos
with style, but the beautifully
weighted counterpoint owes an
equal debt to guitarist James
Emery and bassist John
Lindberg.

Despite being played by an 11-
piece orchestra, Muhai Richard
Abrams' *Blues Forever* (BSR
0061) is more of a one-man show.
Its strength is in the way that the
leader's arrangements add a
further dimension to his composi-
tions. There is no hint of a
dichotomy and Eugene Ghee's
straight clarinet, Baikida Car-
roll's challenging trumpet and
the often down-home strength of
Jean-Paul Bourelly's guitar are
best seen as the icing on the cake.

These are just a few of the ex-
cellent recent issues from the
house that Bonandri built. It is
gratifying that a company that is
so prolific should also manage to
maintain such high musical stan-
dards, offer such good pressings
and provide such respectable
playing times. **Barry McRae**

TAKE ME BACK TO NEW ORLEANS

The annual beano to New Orleans is, of course, the most important fixture in the jazz fan's calendar.

Lesley Stanford is currently organising her fifth Honky Tonkin'

Trip to the 14th New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (29th April-9th May, 1983). She's hoping to keep the all-in cost down to £500 per person and this will secure a 15-night stay in New Orleans from 27th April, including return airfare and accommodation in a luxury-class French Quarter hotel.

Although the artists are still to be announced, the 1983 festival

will again feature evening concerts on a riverboat and at venues throughout the city. Daytime outdoor events at weekends take place at the Fairgrounds Race Track on ten stages offering simultaneous music - jazz, r&b, gospel, soul, cajun/zydeco, blues, folk, latin, country, bluegrass etc. Altogether, you'll have a choice from over 300 performances.

More mouthwatering details are available on request from Lesley Stanford, Honky Tonkin' New Orleans Trip, 54 Perrers Road, Hammersmith, London W6 0EZ; telephone 01-748 2251 (an sac would be appreciated).

Most of us can take a trip like this only once in our lives - Lesley gives you the chance to do it in some style.

GLAA RESULTS

SUNWIND, the **PETE BEACHILL QUINTET** and the **DAVE SHAW QUARTET** - all playing original compositions - are the **GLAA Young Jazz Musicians of 1982-83**.

One of London's 'stately homes' of pop music - the Lyceum in the Strand - provided an unusual, if capacious, venue for the GLAA Jazz Jamboree finals on 26th September (sponsored this year, for the first time, by Capital Radio).

For a venue perhaps more accustomed to hosting disco or rockably all-dayers, the Lyceum's initially incongruous interior soon responded warmly to the more acoustic sounds of young, inventive British jazz.

The musical standard again this year was outstanding. Apart from the three winning bands, we also had a chance to hear the varied songs of the all-woman band Jam Today, a startling solo-piano set from Terry Disley, and a guest appearance from last year's winners - the Mike Mower Quartet.

The main award went to Sunwind after a dynamic performance of Wood-DeFries material from Mark Wood (guitar/synthesiser), Dave DeFries (trumpet/flugelhorn/percussion), Chucho Merchan (acoustic/electric bass) and Nic France (drums/percussion).

The second award - more usually given to just one band - was shared this year by the Beachill and Shaw groups.

The unusual two-trombone frontline of the Pete Beachill-Rick Taylor Quintet provided a bright, well-written set of Taylor

originals, with able support from the rhythm-section - Pete Saberton (acoustic piano), Dave Green (acoustic bass) and Gary Hubbard (drums).

The Dave Shaw Quartet presented some lyrical Bill Evans-inspired compositions - all written by pianist Shaw - with Mark Ramsden (tenor sax), Paul Heard (electric bass) and John Hayman (drums).

Pete Beachill and Rick Taylor are from the ranks of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, and just about any current big-band (like the Bobby Lamb-Ray Premru Orchestra) which is noted for a strong trombone-section.

Pianist Dave Shaw is relatively unknown on the jazz scene but can often be seen in a different role - singing with the all-vocal, doo-wop pastiche band, Flying Pickets.

Tenorist Mark Ramsden -

another NYJO player - also features in Dill Katz-Colin Dudman's excellent 20th Century Blues.

The winning bands will receive assistance from GLAA - this includes financial help with promotion, free studio time for a first-class demo, help and support from two experienced administrators, and a spot on the next Capital Jazz Festival. The three winners have already been featured on a Capital broadcast of highlights from the Jazz Jamboree finals.

Interested promoters should contact Scheme Administrator Ed Pollard (01-946 4114).

You'll be able to catch the winning bands at various venues over the next few months and, with the subsequent GLAA support, it should be very interesting to see how these musicians develop during the next half-year. **CM**



Sussex

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Hurlfield Jazz have moved to the Leadmill Arts Centre, Leadmill Road, hopefully as a more permanent home. Further information from (0226) 86141 (ext 113) or (0742) 754500.

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LETTER PAGE

Flattery gets you everywhere!

The postal response to the first edition of *The Wire* was so overwhelming that even our Editor agreed to 'print and be damned.' Among the superlatives there were some serious critical insights to start the ball rolling; and we look forward to this page becoming a forum for dynamic debate and critical controversy in the world of jazz and improvised music. Thanks for the letters - and keep them flowing in!

... Issue 1 much appreciated in these quarters and 2 eagerly anticipated. Particularly pleased with layout of photos. However, a few moans ... the absence of any article (apart from Charles Fox's brief survey) on anything earlier than 'bop'. You could be boxed into an 'avant-garde' corner.

... Steve Burgen's poem both in its content and its expression is the sort of naive ramblings best left in 5th form fanzines.

... Can we have translations of Brian Case's 'scat' passages?
F. Middleton, West Midlands

Your new magazine is excellent. It certainly does go a long way to filling the void, especially for the under-25 who has been unable to relate to the British jazz press since the demise of *Into Jazz*. Age-ists can be just as nasty as racists and sexists. ... Perhaps the young jazz enthusiast of today is faced with a dilemma. Do you listen only to new developments or should you be more concerned about finding out all about Armstrong, Ellington, Hawkins, Young, Parker and about New Orleans, swing, bop, cool, and why labels are more bother than they are worth; in short, 'digging the roots'.

... The rub, however, is that most people are skint and the cost of LPs is quite prohibitive. ...

... What can be done? Well apart from the political thing about changing governments and creating wealth and like that; one answer is to re-introduce EPs. Not perhaps the ideal solution but four legal tracks is surely better than one illegal cassette recording and a damned sight more convenient at that!

... So here is an opportunity for the record companies to show they really care. Issue EPs of classic jazz, say from 1923 to 1960, retailing at about a quid each. I cannot see how anyone can lose.
P. Emmerson, Newcastle on Tyne

I've been through *The Wire* with close attention and would offer the following comments:

(1) You should have more writers. Instead of five writers' names appearing twelve times in the Index it would be better if twelve writers' names appeared once each.

(2) Most jazz scribes aren't encouraged to work as hard as they should at their writing because jazz periodicals tend to print, virtually uncited, whatever they're sent. This issue will have to be dealt with, though, if the intention is to produce an influential magazine, for quality of comment/criticism is intimately related to the quality of the writing in which it's couched.

(3) Arising out of the above, I'd say your first number carries too many interviews. These are the bane of jazz periodicals. People fancy writing about jazz, find they've nothing of their own to say, and so badger musicians to talk into a tape recorder.

(4) There are far too many pictures. At 85p readers are entitled to a good long read.

(5) There are nothing like enough record reviews. The few you have look like an afterthought. Next time most of the space taken up with photographs should be filled with LP reviews.

... I have been very appreciative of your first edition of 'The Wire'.

Please send me your next issue of 'The Wire' I enjoyed reading your first issue very much.

(6) As you're obviously aware, there's an important job to be done of informing readers about all the music which others ignore. That's why the Capital Jazz piece was welcome. But you also need, I believe, hard-headed critical reviews of live events, saying what the music's doing and what it's worth. Not just a splurge of pictures with gushing comments to match, which is what happens on pages 12/13.

It's to be hoped the above doesn't seem too negative. Some of my opinions may be severe, but they're meant to be constructive.

Max Harrison, London

... In all but the preview of Capital Jazz, what a great magazine, but I would like to make one suggestion. Why not let the record specialists know who you are going to feature in advance. ... Your article (Ran Blake) was so interesting that I felt ignorant of never having heard him. ... I look forward to receiving your next issue. ...

M.H., Sutton Coldfield

Edited by Rita Sanderson

We reserve the right to shorten letters and do not necessarily agree with correspondents.

Thanks for a first issue could you please send me No.2

Many thanks for 1st issue, I thought it was great, very well balanced and well-written

The first issue was excellent particularly the reviews with Steve Gray and A.P. Ma Road

Congratulations and many thanks for the first edition of *The Wire* what a pleasure it was to have a magazine that decided music contained in 1955!

Thanks for your first issue of *The Wire* - I think the writing and photo reports are very good indeed

I really enjoyed the first edition because I felt I was reading about musicians who whilst they have or had a distinct style, have or had not settled into a predictable rut

Can it be applied for a copy of the first issue - I am a regular reader of the magazine

Congratulations! The perfect complement to JAZZ MUSIC NEWS - the hard facts behind the immediate news.

Congratulations on your first issue of *The Wire* - I am a regular reader of the magazine and I am sure it will be a success!

Very impressed by first issue of *The Wire* - please send me details of how to subscribe

Thanks for a great magazine. I especially enjoyed the Solphy article

Congratulations on an excellent magazine

Love it! - First class! You have set yourself a high standard - This is a well-needed journal

I think this is the need for better coverage of the new forms of jazz to both leading a J.T. for which I can say I am a regular reader of your magazine - first class! I am absolutely delighted as it can be so interestingly kept, this is certainly a treasure in every way

Please find enclosed a cheque for £1.00 for the second issue of your fantastic magazine, 'The Wire'

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